



HIT LIST

volume two/number five

march/april 2001

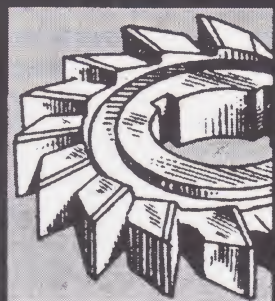
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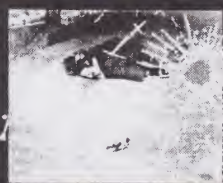


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HIT LIST

volume two number five

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Hit List

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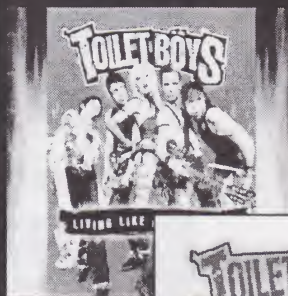
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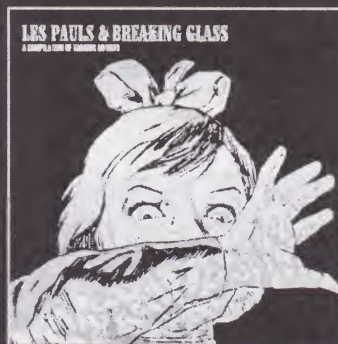
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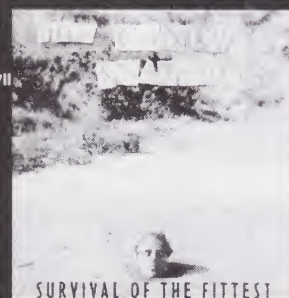
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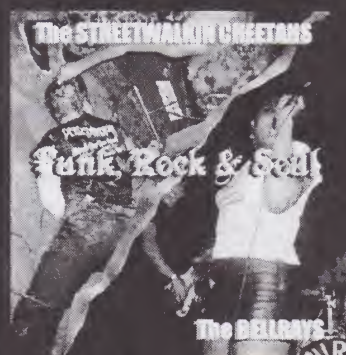
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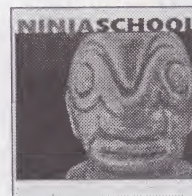
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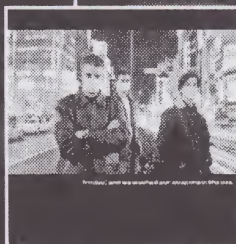
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AN OPEN LETTER TO MR. LARRY LIVERMORE AND HIT LIST READERS:

I recently met Emma Harris at an activist workshop/reading at the Oakland-based Center for Third World Organizing (CTWO). Harris was one of the speakers at a forum to discuss and celebrate the publishing of the new book, *Disposable Domestics: Immigrant Women Workers in the Global Economy* by Grace Chang. For a few years now, Harris has worked with the San Francisco group POWER, People Organized to Win Employment Rights. I was very moved when I spoke with Emma after the program. Among many things, we discussed recent efforts by the janitors at UC Berkeley, the school I attend, to get better wages and a better contract. I could not help but think of many of my professors at school that teach, publish and present scholarly research at international conferences and yet know nothing about the space/context in which much of "their work" is produced: the university. The conversation that Emma and I had reminded me of an observation that the late astronomer Carl Sagan once made about the scientists and scholars who produced a rich amount of "knowledge" in the Library of Alexandria. Not realizing that the slave-society in which they lived and the very fact that slaves had built the Library of Alexandria, many of these intellectuals went on living a "normal" life without ever knowing the inequalities in their society. "The permanence of the stars was questioned," Sagan tells us in his book *Cosmos*, "the injustice of slavery was not."

I wish Larry Livermore could meet Emma Harris. In his column (September-October 2000), Livermore makes some interesting claims about "identity politics." Livermore argues that if only people of color or those "obsessed" with race and ethnicity would somehow stop dividing themselves and others along "tribal lines," then maybe we could have a more "integrated" and "diverse" society. "I just traveled 7,000 miles across the United States and Canada, and everywhere I went," says Livermore, "I saw people of all races interacting, living side by side, intermarrying, remaking the American dream in their own image and likeness." Livermore then goes on to say, in the following paragraph: "When I compare that to the America I grew up in, an America which was rigidly segregated, in which black people didn't even appear on television except as servants and Pullman car porters," he wonders whether these "kids" (who wrote for the special issue on "Race and Punk" in the May issue of *Heartattack*) are on drugs because somehow, what they said/say about white supremacy could be seen as an exaggeration. I'm glad that Livermore was able to travel and see people of all races interacting and living side by side. However, can Mr.

Livermore really argue that segregation is a thing of the past and that we have come pretty far from the days *de jure* segregation? What were those battles that "were won decades ago" about, and how does that discourse "serve to divide people and perpetuate misunderstanding"?

Livermore's comments on race and "identity politics" can be contextualized in much of the discussion/debates about the U.S. "Culture Wars" in the late 1980s and into the 1990s. More recently, discussions surrounding the changing demographics in this country, particularly the fact that by 2050, there will be no single "minority" group in the U.S. population, has forced this country to ask some hard questions (in terms of race relations) about its past, present, and future. Unfortunately, many of the debates within the "culture wars" have focused too much on a binary "multiculturalism" (or what Livermore would call "identity politics") vs. the "cult of ethnicity" argument put forth by liberals like Arthur Schlesinger Jr., who argue that self-interest groups (i.e., people of color) are "disuniting America" when they fail to assimilate and melt into the pot called "America." What both of these arguments rarely bring up is the dynamic relationship of the global economic order and its impact on race relations (materially and discursive) in the U.S. We are living in a time where people's hopes, fears, and choices are very much shaped by growing inequality, both within and between countries. One only needs to read the recent United Nations Human Development Report 2000 to see how global apartheid has dramatically shaped the lives of millions of people around the world. The question is, how will we come to an analysis of the problem? What short term and long term solutions will we propose?

I mention this only because I feel that to address every single aspect of Livermore's comments on "identity politics" is to miss the larger picture: the dialectical relationship between ideas (that individuals hold) and the social relations in society. I'm sorry to say this, but Mr. Livermore merely reflects an outlook of many things that are wrong with Amerika (yes, I still spell it like this after many years 'cuz it's still a vicious beast). To address all of Livermore's claims and not point out the structural inequalities is to debate Livermore on his terms. I WILL NOT DEBATE with Mr. Livermore whether people of color are better off now than they were decades ago (quality not quantity!). I will not debate whether folks of color are the ones dividing ourselves "along tribal lines" by discussing racial oppression in the U.S.

As I stated in the column that Livermore critiqued, "[a]s an activist I know too well the importance of the 'mass line, in organizing: working with people from where they are at

and not where we expect them to be." I still believe in this principle. I have always tried to be humble when dialoguing with people whom I agree and disagree with. I must admit that I'm not as patient with people like Livermore, who for many years now has made his agenda clear. Frankly, I'm more willing to spend my time listening/talking to my mom's neighbor, a white working class guy who lost his job and thinks that it was because undocumented workers are stealing "American jobs." I would much rather spend my time trying to convince my Latino friend (that works at a copy shop across from my school), who thinks that all African Americans are lazy and that that's why they all want welfare.

I found Livermore's comments very illustrative of many "old-time" punkers who in my eyes, were part of something that meant so much to D.I.Y., but, when confronted with a choice (e.g., LOOKOUT\$ \$RECORDS) that would be seen as anti-DIY, conveniently changed "their opinion" to fit their new and improved view on punk/hardcore politics. Kind of like when "legendary" punks now decide to sell Born Against t-shirts (for \$10!) at a Men's Recovery Project show earlier this year. Fucking hypocrites! What's even more ironic is to have a good friend of mine, Mike Kirsch, who knew Livermore very well and even had some releases on Lookout, tell me of a time when Livermore schooled some young kids at a Gilman show (many years ago) about why there is a difference between "white power" and "black power." Is it that people get more fucking conservative (or just learn to "grow up") when they get older? I don't think this has to be the case (hell, look at Lefty Hooligan! No pun intended). YOUTH is not an age, it's an attitude. Having said that, it was pretty sad to read Livermore's earlier column (January-February 2000) in *Hit List*, when he told us younger readers "if you are young — you have one of the greatest opportunities in history to shape the future in this world, to decide whether it's going to continue to grow and learn from its mistakes, or whether it's going to all come crashing down." What happened to the "us" that included you (Livermore) and I and so many other people who are willing to die *and to live* to make this a better place for all folks to live in?

For people like Emma Harris, who don't have the opportunity to travel 7,000 miles around the U.S. and Canada to see "people of all races interacting [and] remaking the Amerikan [oops] dream in their image and likeness," having to organize for better jobs, healthcare, childcare, and a higher salary is not a choice but a reality that is even more complicated than living as an older African American woman in this country. Working in the "welfare-to-work" program in San Francisco shows the many intersectionalities of race/class/gen-

der in our global economy. "There is discrimination of people on welfare in how they get treated. They don't like us going to school," says Harris, "they make us do jobs we don't want to do but we have to because we need the money. They want us to be down, not stronger. At Muni, where I worked, we were treated with no respect. They told us we could not use the same bathrooms because they said we would give them germs. They said we were dirty. Most of us were African American and Spanish-speaking."

Mr. Livermore, if you are ever in the Bay Area, I would be happy to put you in contact with Emma Harris and the many people of color grassroot organizations fighting for social justice. I would even be happy to recommend/or lend you some books to read, because, as William Faulkner put it, "the past is not even past." In fact, the "pan-opticon" that Michel Foucault wrote about in his *Discipline and Punish* has not only helped incarcerate society's prisoners, it has also incarcerated the ideas, hopes, dreams, and vision(s) of many people in society. The *idea* that we have to live in a zero-sum society where some benefit while others don't becomes part of the hegemonic view in society, or, as Foucault put it, the "ideas infused into the soft fibers of the brain." Like the scholars and scientist from the Library of Alexandria, Livermore (and his praise for "western civilization" [January-February issue]) rests on historical memory that denies the past as it denies the present, a relationship that obscures power and privilege from history itself.

Jose Palafox
(josefox@uclink4.berkeley.edu).

P.S. — I have enclosed some reading materials that you might want to read.

When Jose Palafox says, "I wish Larry Livermore could meet Emma Harris," it reminds me of the hamhanded attempts of Al Gore and George W. Bush to personalize their boilerplate rhetoric by introducing slice-of-life characters from the American heartland.

But what is Mr. Palafox getting at? Is he suggesting that until I meet this particular activist, I will remain blissfully unaware that poverty and injustice exist in America? Does he think I have somehow failed to notice that millions of people earn too little money and endure too much hardship? Palafox, himself secure in the cocoon of academia, presumes that I know nothing about "real" life, about the workers who build and maintain the universities in which he and I have been privileged to study, about those even farther down the totem pole, for whom survival itself is the paramount issue.

Obviously he's unaware that I came to the academic life rather late, that in earlier incarnations I

myself was a university janitor who for crap wages cleaned up after students like him. He must be similarly unaware that I've been a factory worker, a laborer on a slag heap, a short order cook, a drug addict, homeless, on welfare. I don't think I need Palafox descending from his ivory tower at the University of California to instruct me about the darker side of life.

But what's particularly discomfiting about Palafox's letter is that it barely touches on the issue to which he's allegedly responding. I criticized him for perpetuating the divisive and failed identity politics of the 1970s, for racializing class and society in a way that is, at its heart, fundamentally racist. He replies with a diatribe that belabors the obvious (that many people are not getting their fair share) and then makes a wild tangential leap to the conclusion that we are still living in a deeply racist society, a "vicious beast" which, according to Palafox's far less reasoned column in *Maximumrocknroll* #209, he is arming himself to destroy.

Are people of color, on average, worse off than white people? Of course. A drive or walk through any inner city will make that obvious. But to draw the conclusion that those people are worse off because of their color is a leap too far. It ignores the fact that significant numbers of white people have also fallen into the underclass, and fails to explain how it has been possible for so many African-Americans and Latinos to be successful in this country. And, though racists of color hate this point and usually refuse even to discuss it, we need only look at the incredible success of Chinese-Americans, who in little more than a century have risen from a position not far removed from slavery to equal or surpass white Americans in many fields of endeavor. How could this be possible if America were such a deeply racist society?

Palafox "will not debate [] whether people of color are better off now than they were decades ago" because he knows there's nothing to debate. By virtually any measure they are better off. In the past half century alone, America has progressed from a state of virtual apartheid to one in which the majority of African-Americans can be described as middle class. Today there are few neighborhoods or places of employment in this country that remain inveterately all-white. It's true that Latinos and African-Americans are under-represented in many professions, and that they earn significantly lower wages — on average. But is this inevitably the result of racism? Or is it that these groups (unfortunately) still have lower levels of education and are relatively recent entrants into many professions?

Palafox apparently would prefer to think that any and all failures on the part of people of color must be laid at the doorstep of racism, when in fact sometimes people of color fail for the same reasons that people of whiteness fail: they don't get enough education, they don't work hard enough, they don't learn the social or interpersonal skills necessary to thrive in modern society, or

they're simply the victims of bad luck. He doles out racism as an all-purpose excuse, exacerbating the problem by telling people that they don't need to change, they don't need to learn and grow, that it's all the white man's fault. Which once again begs the question: how have so many white people also managed to end up in poverty and squalor, and why hasn't their skin color saved them?

Does this mean that African-Americans and other people of color have solved most of their problems, that there aren't still great inequities in terms of income, education, health care, life expectancy, and a host of other issues? Of course not, and I never said otherwise.

What I did say and will repeat here is that the progress made in recent decades within the "vicious beast" of American civilization is immeasurably greater than anything likely to be achieved by Palafox's revolutionary pipe dreams. In the unlikely event that his fantasies of armed revolution come true, the suffering and injustice endured by people of all colors would be multiplied enormously. We need only look at much of sub-Saharan Africa, where the sort of tribalism espoused by Palafox has led to a near total collapse of civil society, constant warfare, and a diminution of life expectancy by as much as half.

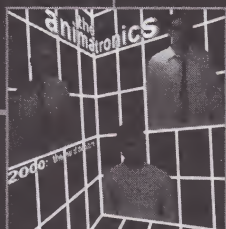
Mr. Palafox and I could probably agree on one thing: that America has a long way to go before it is as fair and open and diverse as it could and should be. However, I will unhesitatingly say that America has already made greater progress toward that goal than nearly any other society I'm aware of — Western Europe being the only possible exception — and shows every sign of continuing that progress, provided, of course, that reactionaries and bigots of both the far right and the far left aren't allowed to inflict their counterproductive agendas on us.

P.S. I'm sorry that Palafox chooses to wrap up his epistle with quotes from that tedious and tendentious charlatan Foucault, whose nihilistic gobbledegook has done more to undermine intelligent discourse than a whole generation of 16 year old Spike Anarkies.

P.P.S I also take issue with his purporting to know anything of substance about my involvement with Lookout Records. For seven of the nine years I was involved with the label, I ran it out of my bedroom. My two employees were, through a profit-sharing program (socialism in action), able to acquire half-ownership of the company. How much more DIY does Palafox want me to be? And when I no longer felt good about being involved in the record industry, I left. End of story. I fail to see how it's more corrupt for me to have made a living from independently producing and distributing records than it is for Palafox to draw his sustenance from one of America's largest nuclear weapons contractors, i.e., the University of California.

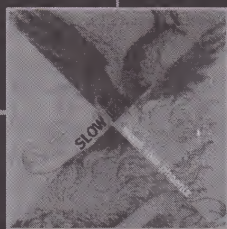
Larry Livermore

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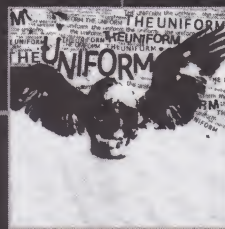
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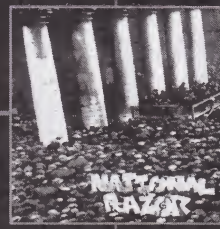
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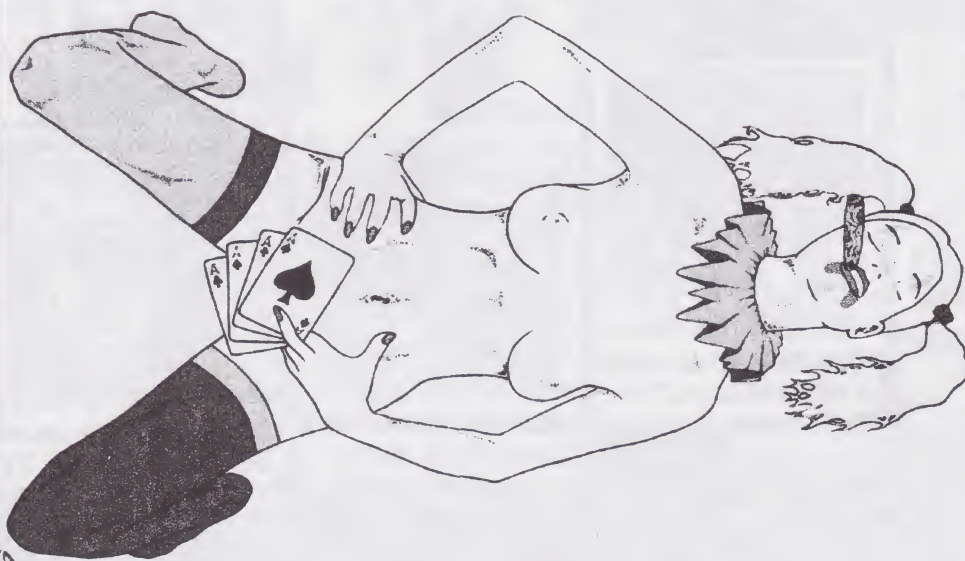
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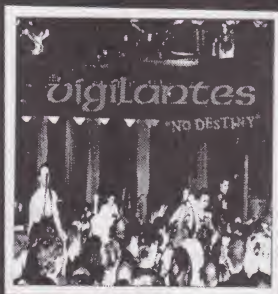
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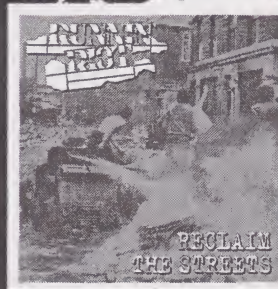
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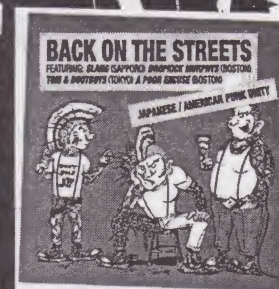
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HAIL TO THE DIMWIT ... AND WOE TO THE WORLD

I'd like to begin this abbreviated column by reprinting some excerpts from a heartfelt e-mail sent out by Phast Phreddie Patterson (who some of you may remember from the pioneering L.A. punkzine *Backdoor Man* or from his old column in the later issues of *Slash*) Therein he makes a several points that are worth reflecting upon.

Democracy, RIP
July 4, 1776 - January 20, 2001

Dear Friends,

I never realized how much I love my country until George Walker Bush successfully stopped the counting of votes in Florida in December, making a mockery of democracy. You never know what you've got until you lose it, as the saying goes. I was completely outraged. I was even more outraged that more people were not outraged. Why wasn't every American in the street rioting?...How can this happen? This is America, where presidents are elected by the people. How did Vice President Al Gore receive more than half a million more votes than the other guy and not win the election? How can anyone in their right mind not see that the Florida election was rigged? It is so obvious. If it were Al Gore who rigged the Florida vote I would be outraged. If I was a Republican I would still be outraged. There's a Grant Lee Buffalo song that goes, "I can hear America snoring." Al Gore let me down by not standing up to the Republican propaganda machine. He won the election, why didn't he just take it? I'm no fan of his. I don't blame Ralph Nader, either. He has a right to run for president. I think America needs a third or fourth or even fifth party in order to represent everyone. Al Gore should have reached out more to the Ralph Nader crowd. Al Gore should have reached out to his own state of Tennessee. Al Gore should have...Well, we all have 20-20 hindsight, don't we?

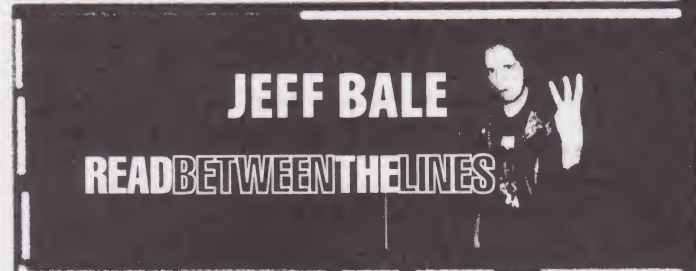
On the way back to New York I couldn't help but paraphrase the end of the T.S. Eliot poem, "The Hollow Men" (was there ever a day with more irony?):

*This is the way democracy ends
This is the way democracy ends
This is the way democracy ends
Not with a bang but a whimper.*

— Freddie Patterson, American.

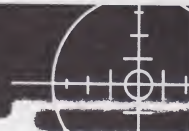
Now that George II ("the Dimwit") has actually assumed office, I have found myself feeling unexpectedly depressed. That someone so utterly without redeeming qualities even managed to become a serious presidential candidate was depressing enough, but the way in which he and his partisans blatantly gerrymandered the vote count by preventing an accurate recount of the ballots, without eliciting so much as a hint of protest from the Fourth Estate or the sheep-like American masses, astonished even me, a professional cynic. I would have thought that almost anyone with half a brain - at least anyone who wasn't a millionaire or didn't own an energy company - would have been appalled by this thoroughly shameful spectacle. (Then again, this is the very same American public that foolishly refused to back the Clintons' national health care plan, even though it would

have benefitted the vast majority of its own members.) Don't get me wrong here. It's easy to understand why nobody was terribly upset because a smarmy guy like Al Gore didn't get elected, but shouldn't it have at least occurred to John Q. Public that something was terribly wrong when *one candidate and one political party did everything in their power to interfere with an accurate counting of the ballots?* After all, the idea that "every vote counts" is in theory the basis of parliamentary democracy. We now know, of course, that in every election 2-3% of the votes fail to get counted due to technical flaws attributable to the various balloting machines. Normally, this loss of a small percentage of the votes cast does not affect the outcome of a presidential election, because one of the candidates usual-



ly wins by a significantly larger margin. In this last election, however, which was particularly close because so few people were enthusiastically supportive of either of the two main candidates, the margin of difference was less than 2%. Hence the normally acceptable "loss" of votes became a critical issue, and everything possible should have been done to ensure that those unregistered votes were accurately counted. On the other hand, obstructing the recount of those "lost" votes would be tantamount to defrauding the American people, something which in fact occurred thanks to the partisan actions of Governor Jeb Bush's coterie in Florida and the prejudicial intervention of the U.S. Supreme Court in that state's internal affairs.

However, even though I myself share Phast Phreddie's anger about the thoroughly undemocratic actions of the Republican Party during the last election - behavior which, alas, the Democratic Party would also have displayed had the situation been reversed - George W. really has the Naderites to thank for giving him the opportunity to shortcircuit the electoral process in the first place. The sad truth is that 90,000 misguided souls voted for Ralph Nader in the state of Florida, one of the most hotly-contested states in the tight contest between Bush and Gore. If they had cast their votes for an obvious loser like Nader in a state where the outcome was already guaranteed, i.e., where it was clear ahead of time that either Bush or Gore would win easily, one could at least justify voting for Nader as a form of symbolic protest. Such was the case in California, for example. But to follow such an electoral protest strategy in a key battleground state, especially when almost all of those protest votes would end up being subtracted from Gore's total, was effectively to hand Bush a victory in the state of Florida, which in turn meant that all of Florida's electoral votes went to the Republican candidate. This turned out to be the decisive factor in the 2000 election. Since Bush's "margin of victory" in Florida ended up being less than 1000 votes, Gore would have won the election easily if a mere 3000 Nader supporters had displayed a minimum of common sense. (Here I am assuming that most Naderites, despite constantly peddling simpleminded rhetoric to the effect that the Democrats and Republicans are indistinguishable from one another, would have rather seen Gore become President than Bush.) But like their candidate, they seem virtually bereft of common sense. In prac-



tice, then, those Floridians who voted for Nader made it possible for Bush and his goons to steal the election. Therefore, they shouldn't be pointing their accusatory fingers at anyone other than themselves.

Allow me to make a suggestion, if you will. The next time anti-Bush protests are organized, as they inevitably will be, all the protesters on the scene who voted for Nader in Florida (or in other battleground states) should ask nearby police officers if they can borrow their batons, then start beating each other upside the head. After they get too weak to continue, their fellow protesters can then pick up where they left off and continue to administer a much-deserved thrashing. Now that would be poetic justice. Unfortunately, most dingbats on the far left and far right rarely even acknowledge, much less make an effort to correct, their own errors. Why should they? After all, it's much more satisfying to blame others, or better yet the "evil" system, than it is to accept responsibility for one's own mistakes. In terms of my attitude toward Nader and his supporters, I must therefore respectfully disagree with Phast Phreddie. Otherwise, we're more or less on the same page.

GEORGE W., CLOSET HIPSTER? I THINK NOT

Those of you who may have witnessed the embarrassing spectacle of George W. awkwardly dancing next to RICKY MARTIN at the pre-inaugural ceremonies might have gotten the impression that the dimwit was a total square (or, perhaps, that he and RICKY were sharing a homoerotic moment). Apparently, though, George wasn't quite that big of a square back in the wacky 1960s. The evidence can be found in the adjacent article, which we are reproducing from *Lingua Franca*, the trendy magazine for pomo academics. Wow! Who knew that George W. was so damned cool back then?

But how cool was he really? If he'd actually been a songwriter or even a band member in the TORQUÉS, a typical "frat rock" group from the period, I'd feel obliged, albeit grudgingly, to grant him some measure of respect. But what was his actual role in the band? To serve as an official "cheerleader", minus only the pom-poms and the miniskirt, while the band was onstage performing! Rather than creating something of his own, all he did was hang out with his fraternity brothers, slam down a few shots and brewskis, and then go out and act stupid on the dance floor. The only difference between him and the rest of the world's frat dorks is that he apparently did so *on cue from the TORQUES*. Whether that made him marginally cooler or even more pathetic than the average fratboy is anybody's guess. The grim truth is that George W. Bush was a non-entity, a conformist, and a follow-

er back then, and he's still a non-entity, a conformist, and a follower today. Three traits which, it scarcely needs to be pointed out, have never been considered "cool", "hip", or "avant-garde". And even though he has now, thanks primarily to his father's money and connections, managed to become the titular head of the most powerful country in the world, the guy is still a lazy, smirking fratboy with nothing upstairs. For this very reason, I'm afraid that RICKY MARTIN is all too representative, culturally-speaking, of the unfolding Bush presidency: vacuous, clueless, generic, smarmy, and filthy rich.

FOR THOSE ABOUT TO PUNK OUT, I SALUTE YOU

In recent years several excellent compilations of heartbreakingly sad and impossibly moody mid-60's garage laments have been released, and I must confess that this has since become one of my all-time favorite musical subgenres. Perhaps it's because the older and more reflective you get, the more you feel an acutely painful sense of having squandered wonderful opportunities and forever lost true loves, as well as a deep-seated longing for great times that are now past, never to return. For whatever reason or combination of reasons, I spend a lot of time these days listening to such achingly sad and bit-

tersweet songs, and as far as I'm concerned the best places to find them are on compilations like the ones highlighted below.

The first is the "No No No" collection on the fabulous Arf! Arf! label, which consists of 28 "moody, somber, and tragic" tracks that fully live up to their grim billing. There's scarcely a bad, much less uplifting, song on this entire comp, and anyone who doesn't feel like breaking down and crying out loud after hearing gems like the SAVAGES' "No No No", the WANTED's "Here to Stay", the SOMETHING ELSE's "Let Me Say Now Love", the BOUNTY HUNTERS' "The Sun Went Away", the MISSING LYNX' "Hang Around", the STONE MEN's "Depression", the SATISFACTIONS' "Never Be Happy", the COUNTS' "Now You're Gone", the LOST SOULS' "Lost Love", the PAUPERS' "Searching for Someone", the MADHATTERS' "You May See Me Cry", the PSYCHOPATHS' "See That Girl", the IN MATES' "The Same", and the EYE ZOOMS' "She's Gone", has

got to have the proverbial heart of stone. All in all, 74 minutes of pure, abject misery!

Another is the "I'm Down Today" volume in Crypt's great

BOY GEORGE

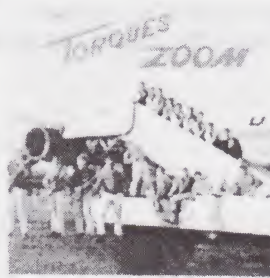
THE YOUNG GEORGE W. BUSH'S DAYS AS A MEDIOCRE STUDENT at Andover have been well documented. What is less well known, however, is that the most famous member of the Class of 1964 was also a peripheral member of an Andover garage-band collective called the Torqués. A group of more than two dozen musicians, stage performers, and rock 'n' roll hopefuls, the Torqués were popular for a time on the New England tea-dance and prom circuit. The collective included a number of bit performers, some called Clappers and others known as Screammers. The latter were planted in the audience to make noise and rush the stage. One of the Screammers? George W.

During its three-year existence, the band kicked out a startlingly good thirteen-song LP featuring a version of the Trashmen's "Surfin' Bird" so wild and primitive that Andover's Bach lovers once picketed a gig. "Other Andover bands like the Invictas, the Satans, and the Apostles were better," says Randy Hobler, the Torqués' lead guitarist, who today is an Internet marketing consultant in the New York area; to stand out, the band billed itself as "the largest rock 'n' roll group in the world."

The cheers and hand claps of the future Texas governor didn't make it to vinyl, unfortunately—the Screammers weren't formalized until after the album was recorded. But Bush may get another chance to rush the stage. "There's a quorum of Torqués available to play an inaugural ball," Hobler says, adding that if Bush is sworn in as president, the band will be happy to administer the Clapper Oath to him.

—T. Corey Brennan

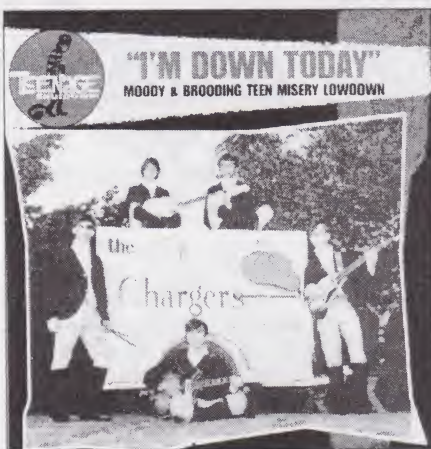
(From *Lingua Franca* 10:9 (December 2000-January 2001))



"Teenage Shutdown" series, which contains 18 doses of "moody and brooding teen misery lowdown". Almost all of 'em are fetching, and if you don't feel like dying inside after listening to chestnuts like the DRONES' "I'm Down Today", the IRON GATE's "Feelin' Bad", the ZOO's "Sometimes", the YOUNG MONKEY MEN's "I Believed You", the RIOTS' "I Can Go On", the JAGGED EDGE's "How Many Times", and, best and perhaps saddest of all, the SHAYNES' "From My Window", you must already be emotionally dead. I can't say enough good things about that SHAYNES track, which is surely one of the

finest songs I've ever heard.

The third is the LP series called "Project Blue", five or six volumes of which have so far appeared. The sound quality on these records leaves a lot to be desired since, in contrast to the great sound on the aforementioned CD comps, the tracks are recorded off scratchy old 7" records. Despite this severe disadvantage, the compilers



have managed to unearth some tremendously rare material, some from Europe as well as the United States. Unfortunately, I lack both the space and the time to discuss individual volumes at this point, but I wish someone would re-release them all on compact disc, since several of the vinyl versions are out of print.

To some extent all of this self-pitying pissing and moaning about not being loved, losing your love, having no friends, being without hope, etc., is the flipside of the notorious 60's punk aggression and snarl. All those cool cats who belligerently told gurls who'd wronged or ignored them to just go away and leave them be were simply deluding themselves or perhaps putting on a brave public front for their friends. Once they arrived at home, and were suddenly all alone with their thoughts and emotions, they soon changed their tune and started bawling like babies, confessing their undying love, apologizing profusely, and begging those same gurls to forgive them and come back. Attractive and/or charismatic gurls have always wielded that type of immense interpersonal power, and most of 'em eventually become aware of it and take advantage of it. (The only people who seem not to have noticed who the dominant parties are in most personal relationships are dimwitted radical feminists - perhaps because they themselves lack the ability to make men care that much about them - and as a result they stupidly seek to "empower" women by continually peddling the horrendously counterproductive "women as perennial victims" line.) In other words, the volumes above reflect the more sensitive, introspective side of innumerable "bad boy" 60's garagameisters.

Perhaps their total loser selves and lives

JEFFBALE

are best revealed in the following lines from a couple of representative tracks. In their absurdly hopeless song "Depression", the SPEC-TRES put it this way: "Life is a struggle that no one has ever won." Phew! Now there's a philosophical perspective worthy of Kierkegaard or Sartre. Perhaps more typical, but no less grim and hopeless, are the following observations by the DRONES in "I'm Down Today": "I'm down today/My life is just sorrow/I've been down for so long/And I'll be down tomorrow." What more can I say, except that I sometimes feel exactly the same way? I'll bet the rest of you bad boy rock-'n'rollers out there sometimes do too, so why not pick up these collections and spend some time wallowing in your own misery? Don't worry, the worst that will happen is that you'll blow your brains out afterward. Just don't forget to leave a suicide note blaming it all on the gurl who wronged you the most. Maybe, in the end, you can make her life as miserable as she made yours. But I wouldn't bet on it..



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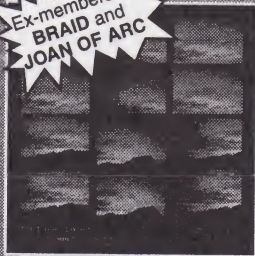
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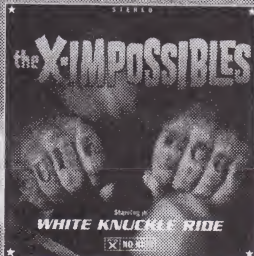
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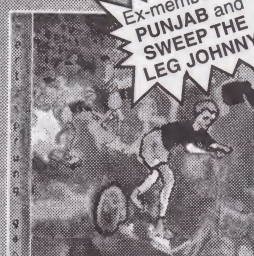
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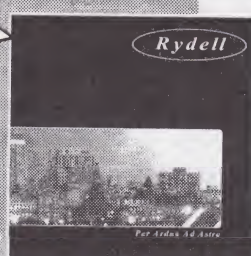


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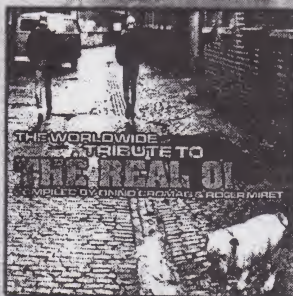
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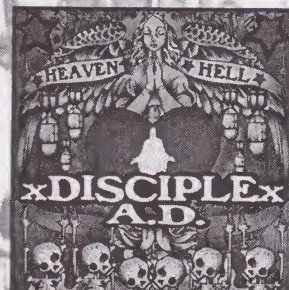
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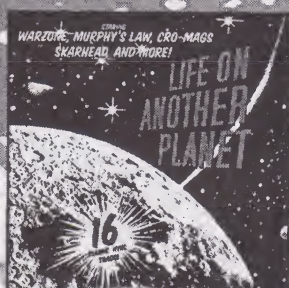
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I don't even want to begin to talk about this election, but some interesting facts were just forwarded to me by Adam Stern about what has historically happened to presidents elected in a year ending in "0"-

1840: William Henry Harrison (Died in Office)

1860: Abraham Lincoln (Assassinated)

1880: James A. Garfield (Assassinated)

1900: William McKinley (Assassinated)

1920: Warren G. Harding (Died in Office)

1940: Franklin D. Roosevelt (Died in Office)

1960: John F. Kennedy (Assassinated)

1980: Ronald Reagan (Shot but Survived Assassination Attempt)

And as he put it, to think 2 guys are duking it out in court to see



US: Counterclockwise from top: George Rebelo, Chris Wollard, Jason Black & CHUCK. Hot Water Music are back with a massive new singles comp.

who's going to be the guy elected in a year which has 3 "0"'s in it! I guess this can be summed up by the fact that this was the election that won a dead guy a seat in the senate - not to mention that he was a Democrat running in a Republican state. More power to the dead!

This year is starting off rockin'!! HOT WATER MUSIC just came out with *Never Ender*, which pulls it's tracks from the "Alachua" 7", and their tracks from their splits with RYDEL, CLAIRMEL, TOMOR-

ROW, and SCREAMING FAT RAT. This record also came out as a double CD and LP (that's right, with a bonus ALBUM), with the second CD consisting demo tracks, available only from No Idea! or the band on tour. (Having vinyl come out on No Idea is a terrible thing if you're a record collector nerd, as it will be on all sorts of different colors and combinations, seeing as how it's a double LP. Start collecting). Order the double CD or LP for \$12 post paid from No Idea, or pick up the single album version in any store. HWM is also in the studio as I type recording for a new album for Epitaph. That's right, Epitaph. The vinyl of this will once again probably go through No Idea!. Early word on the record is that it's right in-between "Fuel For The Hate Game" and "No Division". Sounds like an OK recipe to me! Talk of a tour in March.



Tuesday Night Music Club: The Sheryl Cro(w)-Mags

Speaking of HWM, Chris (guitar/vox from HWM) has a new band/side project whose first 7" has just come out. Get this; it's called the SHERYL CRO(W) MAGS. Ladies and gentlemen, we have a winner for the greatest band name of all time!! Beyond being worth getting for the name alone, this 7" kicks ass. Bill from Radon on drums never hurts either. More straight forward and

"punk" than any of their previous outfits, although for a band who supposedly revolves their existence around racing to the bottom of the whiskey bottle, their songs are well thought out and extremely tight. Their brand of quality Rock is available through their label (which also shows a similar glimmer of brilliance in its moniker) Cro(w)s and Pawns, or from NO IDEA. Collector nerd alert, it's already out on 2 different colors, don't miss one.

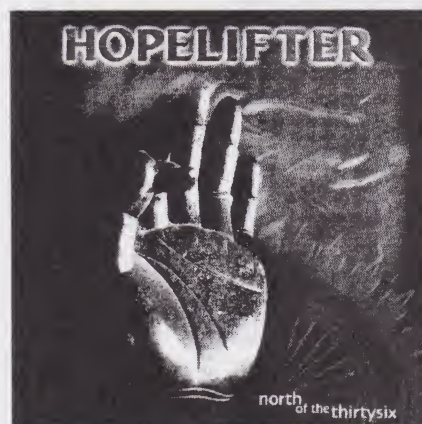
Since this just seems to be the NO IDEA corner of the column, let me just say that the end of March will have the new full length release for a brilliant band called SMALL BROWN BIKE. Some of you might be familiar with them from their first full-length, or their "Collection" CD (which by the way, will



also be out on vinyl soon), but get ready for this LP. It blows their first two releases away, which is saying a lot if you know what those sound like. There is a lot of HOT WATER MUSIC in what they do, but it is less poppy, and might actually have more cool little changes and bridge parts. Definitely a great listen. Keep your eyes out for it toward the end of March, as I would highly recommend picking it up.

There is also a new band called SAN GERONIMO that I think that we are going to be lucky enough to work with. SAN GERONIMO features Peter Martin, former handler of guitar

chores for LIFETIME and JETS TO BRAZIL, and Todd Tomlinson, ex-drummer from DROWNING-MAN. Knowing where these guys are coming from, you should know what to expect, and then get ready for some more. As I said, there is a 6 song CD-EP in the works for early 2001, that we'll hopefully get to put out. I have worn out the three



advance copies that I have received, and can promise you a jewel. Keep your eyes open.

In case you miss that sound that they call "East Bay Hardcore", even though it was never more than just punk rock, there are a couple new bands that you should look into. HOPELIFTER, feature Andrew Atai from SCREW 32, and the 2 guitarists from TRIPLE/A. While anything Andrew sings for is going to sound somewhat like SCREW 32, this band had an awesome character of its own. They have great songs, with great guitar work, and you'll be wanting more. Unfortunately you won't get it. The band has recently called for a break that they probably won't come back from. As it stands, they

HIT SQUAD

have 2 CD-EP's. I would highly recommend to all fans of SCREW, DAG NASTY, SWIZ, etc... to check out the bands release on Sessions Records, and if that floats your boat, track down their first CD-EP.

The other band I was speaking of might be my favorite Bay Area band right now. The NERVE AGENTS fucking rule!! You

bashing the United States, and talking about what a terrible place it is to live. These guys live in FUCKING CANADA!! What's really going on here? Anyway, this record rules, and might be their strongest effort to date. Check out the guitar riff break on "Back To The Motor League", and tell me metal doesn't kick ass.

And just in case you have been living under a rock for the last few



THE GREATEST BAND IN THE BAY TODAY?: The Nerve Agents rock with a force greater than the sum total of all lesser EBHC bands. Then again, I don't really think of them as hardcore, either. This as punk as it gets, kids. Plug in, and rock the fuck out.

will call this hardcore, and you will be wrong. This is as punk as it gets. BLACK FLAG meets BAD BRAINS meets CIRCLE JERKS meet the MISFITS. Nothing fancy about the songs, but

they rip your head off. The NERVE AGENTS feature Eric Ozone from one of my all time faves REDEMPTION 87, as well as UNIT PRIDE (that's going way back), and Tim and Andy from MODEL AMERICAN. If you dig Ray Cappo-style vocals, this is a must. Actually, this is a must for anybody with a pair of ears. Check out their new full-length, "Night Of The White Owl" and their previous CD-EP - both on Revelation Records. Rumor on

months and haven't heard all the hype about AMERICAN NIGHTMARE, I'm here to save your day. Fuck what PUBLIC ENEMY says, believe the damn hype! These guys bring straightforward, in-your-



SWEET DREAMS, KIDDIES: American Nightmare comes to your house.

DAVE ALREADY LIKES HIM 'CUZ HIS FAVORITE RECORD OF ALL TIME IS HOLY DIVER: Propagandhi's new Bassmaster General, Todd the Rod.

the street has these guys doing a deal with Epitaph/Hellcat in the near future, who also just secured DEATH BY STEREO for their label. HOT WATER MUSIC, NERVE AGENTS, and DEATH BY STEREO all signed by one label in a few months; Epitaph is on it!!

Also check out the new PROPAGANDHI, called *Today's Empires, Tomorrow's Ashes*. They have replaced the bassist (whom has gone on to another band appropriately titled THE WEAKERTHANS), with a monstrous HC trooper. Now the songs sung by the bass player - which used to be the sweet pop songs of their records - are now the most brutal. One thing I don't get about this band is that this is their third consecutive full length where the majority of the lyrics are spent



ANSWER: CHAIRS. Question? In this picture, what's under the Influents?

face HC right through your speakers and into your living room. Great guitar riffs with heavy as shit breakdowns, and lots of intelligent turnarounds. Their new CD EP (unfortunately only 7 songs) is available through Bridge 9 Records, and is actually available also as a limited color vinyl 6 song 7". The band just finished recording a new full length for Equal Vision Records, and is scheduled to be released May 29th of this year. This is a band to watch out for.

Now that I've gotten my testosterone filled HC/punk rock fix out of the way, there are a couple of great power pop bands that need to be talked about. Check out a band called the INFLUENTS on Adeline records. Comprised of Jason from PINHEAD GUNPOWDER (guitar &



vox), and now of GREEN DAY (2nd guitar), Bill from PINHEAD GUNPOWDER (bass), Greg, Bill's brother from, well, wherever, and Willie Samuels from the RECEIVERS (one of the most underrated East Bay bands ever) (drums). If you told me that this was the new GREEN DAY, I would believe you. But as people put it around here, if GREEN DAY were the BEATLES, the

INFLUENTS would be the ROLLING STONES. Just a little more rock. Great hooks. Great recording. Think REPLACEMENTS with a little SST-era DINASOUR JR. thrown in. Don't expect to see a mosh pit at their show, but expect to do some mighty fine dancin'!

Two other records that are on the power pop side of R&R are the new FIGGS and the new BRIEFS records. The FIGGS mix the integrity of the REPLACEMENTS, the energy of the JAM, and the songwriting sensibility of ELVIS COSTELLO. What else can be said? Check it out. It's called "Sucking In Stereo", and it's on HearBox.com Records. I'm sure you could probably figure out the web address on this one. And the BRIEFS' new record "Hit After Hit" is just a must have R&R slab. Mix the sounds of the ADVERTS, ANGRY SAMOANS, BOYS, and a little DEAD BOYS. Just go buy it. It's on Dirt Nap Records, and should be readily available. Look for feature articles on all of the above-mentioned bands in upcoming issues of *Hit List*.

So the new *Zine Guide* came out, and to my surprise, *Hit List* was the #5 zine overall, and this was from a survey done almost a year ago. We ranked #3 with record labels, and #7 with readers. This was quite flattering, and I would like to thank all of you who partook in this survey. A few things bothered me about the results though. While it's no surprise — and no mystery as to *why* — we didn't rank well amongst the other zinesters that were polled, and I was quite disappointed to see the lack of response from female readers that were polled. I hope that this is something that will change in the ladder of these two in the near future. One other thing that I am bummed about is our ranking on the least favorite list. We didn't even break the top 20. Our ultimate goal is to be #1 on both the favorite, and least favorite list, but as it turns out, some other magazine has #1 locked up on the least favorite list, and I've been told that the next 20 runners up votes don't even add up to give this placeholder *any* competition. I guess we'll have to try harder.

I'm going to leave this one short and sweet. My New Year's resolution is to be less cynical and talk less shit. If this column goes on much longer, I know I'll blow both those out of the water in fine fashion. For now, I leave you with a little food for thought that will hopefully remind you what a funny world we live in, and the best way to get through is to laugh about it. Oh yeah, and rock the fuck out!

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. Rubber bands last longer when refrigerated.
2. Peanuts are one of the ingredients in dynamite.
3. There are 293 ways to make change for a dollar.
4. The average person's left hand does 56% of the typing.
5. A shark is the only fish that can blink with both eyes.
6. There are more chickens than people in the world.
7. Two-thirds of the world's eggplant is grown in New Jersey.
8. The longest one-syllable word in the English language is "screeched."
9. On a Canadian two dollar bill, the flag flying over the Parliament building is an American flag.
10. All of the clocks in the movie "Pulp Fiction" are stuck on 4:20.
11. No word in the English language rhymes with month, orange, silver, or purple.
12. "Dreamt" is the only English word that ends in the letters "mt".
13. All 50 states are listed across the top of the Lincoln Memorial on the back of the \$5 bill.
14. Almonds are a member of the peach family.

15. Winston Churchill was born in a ladies' room during a dance.

16. Maine is the only state whose name is just one syllable.

17. There are only four words in the English language which end in "dous": tremendous, horrendous, stupendous, and hazardous.

18. Los Angeles' full name is "El Pueblo de Nuestra Senora la Reina de los Angeles de Porciuncula"

19. A cat has 32 muscles in each ear.

20. An ostrich's eye is bigger than its brain.

21. Tigers have striped skin, not just striped fur.

22. In most advertisements, the time displayed on a watch is 10:10.

23. Al Capone's business card said he was a used furniture dealer.

24. The characters Bert and Ernie on Sesame Street were named after Bert the cop and Ernie the taxi driver in Frank Capra's "It's a Wonderful Life."

25. A dragonfly has a life span of 24 hours.

26. A goldfish has a memory span of three seconds.

27. A dime has 118 ridges around the edge.

28. It's impossible to sneeze with your eyes open.

29. The giant squid has the largest eyes in the world.

30. In England, the Speaker of the House is not allowed to speak.

31. The microwave oven was invented after a researcher walked by a radar tube and a chocolate bar melted in his pocket.

32. Mr. Rogers is an ordained minister.

33. The average person falls asleep in seven minutes.

34. There are 336 dimples on a regulation golf ball.

35. "Stewardesses" is the longest word that is typed with only the left hand. †

*Our ultimate goal is to be
#1 on both the favorite
and least favorite lists [in
the Zine Guide].*

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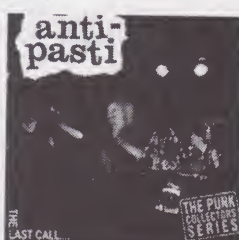
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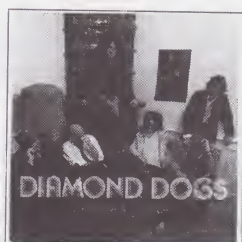
Anti-Pasti - The Last Call
CDPUNK 048 Format: CD



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UC001-2 Format: CD, LP



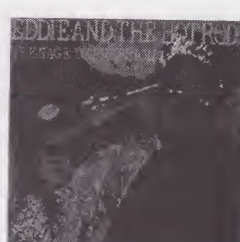
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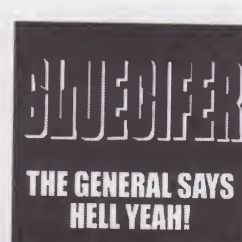
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Believers
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The Drones - Sorted
AHOYCD111 Format: CD



Eddie and The Hot Rods -
Teenage Depression
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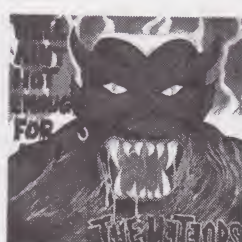
Gluecifer - The General Says Hell
Yeah!
JAZZ 031 Format: CD, 45



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PRISON 122 Format: CD



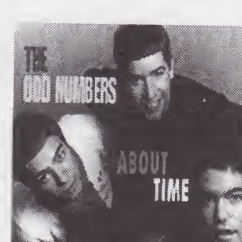
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For Me! ROTT 90082 Format: CD



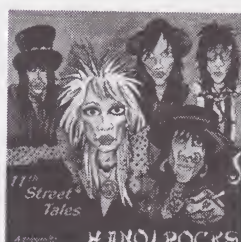
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ROTT 90032 Format: CD



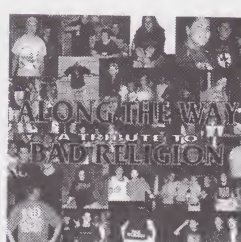
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CF 041 Format: CD



Racketeers - Mad For The Racket
TRK 1004 CD Format: CD



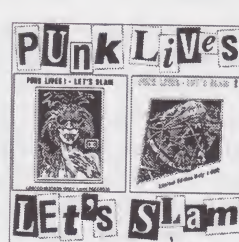
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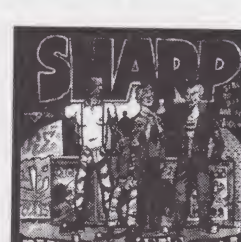
VIA - Along The Way - A Tribute To
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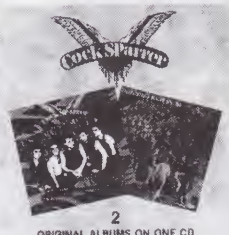
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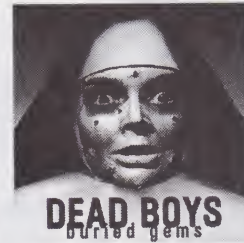
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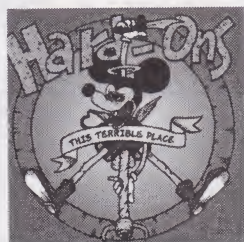
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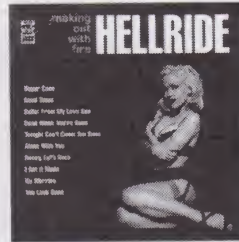
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Format: 45



The Hard-Ons - This Terrible Place BTR 45
Format: CD



The Hellcopters / The Flaming Sideburns - White Trash Soul AFROCD 008
Format: CD, 10"



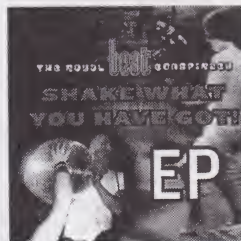
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Format: CD



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Format: CD, LP



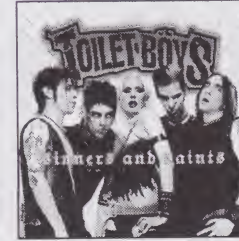
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Format: CD, LP



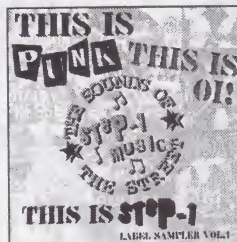
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Format: CD



U.K. Subs - Another Kind Of Blues AHOYCD134
Format: CD



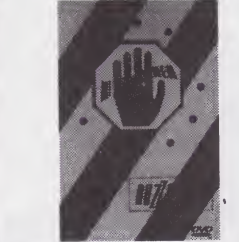
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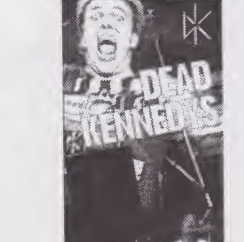
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Dead Kennedys - DMPO's On Broadway CRDVD 001
Format: DVD

THE FIRE

Interview by (the fabulous and beloved) Texas Terri
This five-piece fireball from Vancouver, Canada, consists of:

Jay Solyom, vocals • C.C. Voltage, bass guitar • Dean,
lead and rhythm guitar • Dave Paterson, lead and rhythm
guitar • Ryan Seven, drums



GEAR UP FOR A GREAT BIG PARTY, KIDS, BECAUSE THE SPITFIRES MAY BE COMING TO YOUR TOWN NEXT AND NOT A DAY TO SOON. IF YOU ASK ME.

For the past five years they've been gracing stages all across Canada and the U.S., playing their own style of rock and roll to appease the masses, and have thus far succeeded in creating a veritable explosion wherever they go.

Now, at long last they've come out with a new album, "In Too Deep Again", a tribute to all that is good about rock and roll. And it is exactly that, an awesome display of really well-written songs, killer production, and the inner knowledge that if you go to one of their shows you're gonna have a drunken, slobbering good time. Songs such as "All Night Long" bring back the sleazy feeling you only get in your sexual prime, whereas "Highschool" will remind all you outcasts of your teenage angst. Add eleven more rip-roarin' rock hits, and you've got an LP which stands up to, if not head and shoulders above, the best of the competition out there.

"In Too Deep Again" is their second full-length release, and is out on Junk Records, an L.A.-based label headed by Lou Carus and Nancy Farber, who are always lookin' for the best r'n'r outfits (such as the Dragons, the Weaklings, and a host of other decadent, extravagant rockers). Junk is trying to help keep the rock alive, by way of grace or disgrace, whatever it takes.

The Spitfires are a hard-working group of mid-twenties rockers who have paid their dues and clawed their way up from the bottom, in the process bringing you, the listener, everything you've ever wanted or needed to hear. So keep your eyes and ears peeled for 'em. They've also got a few other vinyl tidbits out there to tantalize your eardrums, such as their first self-titled album released on Cleveland's Sonic Swirl label, a self-titled 7" released on Washington's Estrus label, the "Slick Black Cat" 7" released on the Junk label, and more 7"ers on the way. They'll also be featured on several compilations, including one volume in Sal from ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN's "Fistful of Rock" series and Junk's "Straight Outta The Gutter" comp. Scotland's Twenty Stone Blatt label (otherwise known as T.S.B.) is also releasing a comp with a few SPITFIRES songs.

'Nuff said! On with the interview, which was conducted over the telephone by me, the fabulous and beloved Texas Terri.



TT: Hey, Spitfires, it's my birthday and you fuckers are keepin' me at home to do an interview, so who am I talkin' to? (a round of "happy birthdays" ensues)

CC: Me, Deano, Ryan, and Jay are here. Dave is on tour luggin' equipment for the Black Halos right now.

TT: Why is he doin' that? Were they too hard on the last guy?

CC: I guess so. Actually I don't really know what happened, but when we were gettin' ready to leave SXSW we got a phone call from Matt. Their roadie had packed his bags and gone back to Seattle, so Dave offered his services as a friend, and instead of going home with us he flew to St. Louis.

TT: When is he getting back?

Deano: I think he'll be gone for about a month, and the funny thing is he didn't have any clothes with him other than what he was wearing.

TT: That's pretty raunchy. He sounds like my kinda guy! How does your scheduling work, are you really busy, do you get to practice much, do you have day jobs, what are they, who books your shows, are you touring much? Tell me all about it.

Ryan: We are really busy, since me and Jay both work in the movie industry.

TT: Is that right? I've been hearing alot about you Canadian fuckers stealing all the films and TV shows outta L.A.

Ryan: Yeah, baby, we're takin' it all!

Deano: I'm on welfare, but I still feel busy!

CC: I'm going to school full time right now. I plan to become a teacher.

TT: A teacher. huh? Just what are you going to teach, Mr. Voltage?

CC: I'm majoring in history, and am probably going to select German as my minor.

TT: Good for you, CC. What does Dave do?

CC: Dave actually works in a program called the Portland Society, which basically provides low income housing for drug addicts and crazy people in the East Hastings area of Vancouver.


TT: Do you guys have much time for the band?

Jay: Not really. We practice maybe once a week "if" we're lucky!

Deano: Ryan actually has three kids and a wife, and he's only twenty three! So he's pressed for time more than any of us.

TT: Ryan, you busy boy, what's that all about?





"We want to sit on the beach this summer and be beautiful bronzed Adonises!"

Ryan: I've gotten a vasectomy now, so the way I figure it I'll be the first one to gain real freedom in the band. My kids will all be grown up and moved out of the house, whereas these guys will probably still be dealing with preteen horrors.

Deano: That's probably true.

Ryan: But I do love my wife and kids.

TT: Aww, isn't that sweet? So how the hell do you find time to tour and do all those shitty things necessary to get your band out there?

CC: We used to have to do everything for ourselves, and it was really hard to organize the time and activities. But now we have Patty, our new sort of promoter/manager, and she is taking a pretty big load off of our backs. Even with her doing all that she does, it's still more work than one might think to be in a working rock band.

TT: Don't I know it!

CC: In order to go on tour, like most bands I'm sure, we basically just have to drop our normal lives, accept whatever financial losses there will be, and go for it.

TT: How do you manage to come up with all those beautiful songs if you're so damn busy?

Ryan: I write most of them.

TT: You mean that Ryan the drummer writes most of the songs for the almighty SPITFIRES?

Jay: Yep.

CC: Ryan could write a whole album in a day if he was in the mood.

Ryan: I don't actually write all the songs, but I probably wrote over half of the new album.

TT: You mean on the brand new rock riot album, *In Too Deep Again*?

Ryan: That's the one, do you like it?

TT: Yeah, I love it. I really like the song "Just My Luck".

Ryan: Thanks, I wrote that one.

Deano: I think that ever since he got his balls snipped, he doesn't have anything better to think about than music.

Ryan: Hey, I get laid more than any of you! (A round of "bullshits" ensues, and the testosterone starts flying.)

TT: Do you guys figure you get a lot of pussy being in a rock and roll band?

Deano: I've never gotten laid because I'm in a rock band. I have to work for it, just like everyone else, and I haven't had sex in a long time.

TT: I thought you had a girlfriend.

Deano: Not for almost a year now.

TT: You're just waiting for me, right?

Deano: You got it, sweetheart!

TT: What about the rest of you?

Ryan: I've got a wife, so I get laid all the time.

Jay: Pretty much everyday.

Deano: I think CC is getting the most lately, because he's got a brand new woman.

TT: Who's that, CC?

CC: My little sweetie Pammy.

TT: How long have you two been together?

CC: A few months. I guess.

TT: Enough with the stupid questions! How long did it take to write your new record?

Jay: I don't know, I guess we took a year after the first record to get this one finished.

Ryan: But I probably could have written it in a week!

Deano: The truth is that Ryan writes a lot of riffs and stuff, and then he brings them to practise and we all just sort of work things out and polish it up.

TT: Are you guys proud of your new record?

Jay: We hate our first record!

Ryan: We hate our second record, too.

TT: Is that what you mean by "in too deep again"?

Ryan: No, that's what I said to Deano at our hotel room in Texas.

TT: I heard about you guys having



homosexual tendencies!

Ryan: That's Dave, the new guy.

TT: I heard rumors that your drummer and my drummer have something going on.

Deano: That's a fact.

CC: I think they would look really good together.

Ryan: That is very true.

TT: I don't know how I missed all this.

CC: Uh oh, everyone is leaving the phone and gravitating towards Jay's Hindu Food.

TT: I wish I had some Hindu food. I'd smear it all over you boys and lick it off.

Deano: That sounds all right. Just wait till I get down to L.A.

TT: Oh, I'm waiting. How about SXSW, how did you like my home town?

CC: Austin wasn't too good to us. It was a cool town, but our show sucked.

Jay: They actually walked out on us!

TT: That was probably because Antiseen was playing down the street, right?

Deano: I guess so.

TT: Did you have fun in Austin other than at your own show?

Deano: Yeah, we went to the Sub Pop showcase, where our buddies the Black Halos were playing. We had a lot of fun there.

CC: I had fun all over the place.

Jay: I've got news for you all, Paul Stanley came out of the closet.

TT: You guys are infatuated with KISS, aren't you?

Deano: I am.

Jay: So am I.

CC: I like 'em, too.

Ryan: I'm more into the Sebadoh, Dinosaur Jr., Guided By Voices kinda thing.

TT: What other bands do you really love?

Deano: Alice Cooper, the Devil Dogs, the New Bomb Turks, AC/DC, Nick Cave, Alanis Morissette, etc.

CC: AC/DC and the Rolling Stones; nothing else.

TT: You guys definitely have your own sound, though.

Deano: Thanks, hotpants.

TT: By the way, Demonboy told me to give you all kisses over the phone, and I'm supposed to tell you he misses you all alot.

Deano: We miss you too, Demonboy. Thanks for the telekisses.

CC: We've gotta get together this summer.

TT: We are gonna get together soon. If you all can make it, I was gonna see if you wanted to go on tour through Texas and New Orleans with us?

CC: When did you wanna do that?

TT: At the end of September.

CC: Shit, that would screw me up for school.

TT: What are you takin' in school again?

CC: Mostly American history right now.

TT: But that's so boring, isn't it?

CC: I don't think so. It's alot more interesting than Canadian history!

TT: At least there are only a few hundred years of American history, and then you're through.

CC: Since I'm majoring in it, I gotta take all sorts of history: European, Canadian, American.

TT: What's your favorite type of history so far?

CC: Probably American history.

TT: Shit, you're gonna be in school for the rest of your fuckin' life!

CC: Yeah, it's good that I can live off of student loans.

TT: I see, that's the theme of the SPITFIRES: livin' off the government!

Deano: That's the plan.

Jay: Hey, the government lives off me!

Deano: I guess that means that me and CC live off you. Thanks, buddy!

Jay: Fuck you, you bums!

TT: Are you planning to go



to Europe at all?

CC: I think so. The guy from T.S.B. is trying to get us over there, and if he can set it up we'll go.

TT: I just wanna say that we had a blast with you guys when we played together.

CC: That was because we were all drunk!

Jay: We're boring when we're sober!

Ryan: I'm always sober!

TT: I wanna ask you guys something real personal. If a major label asked you to sign, would you sign?

Deano: Yes.

Ryan: We're in it for the money, baby, we love the money!

TT: Aren't you afraid that they'll just take over?

Jay: No way. Let 'em go ahead and take over if they want to.

Deano: We're too lazy anyway.

TT: What if they tried to prevent you from playing live for an entire year?

Jay: I wanna be the next Madonna.

TT: Yeah, that's good because she's ruthless. But you'll probably end up being Courtney Love!

CC: I don't think a major would touch us anyways.

TT: Really? Don't you think that most major

record labels don't know what the fuck they're doing anyways?

CC: That's exactly my point. We'd pick the major that pays the most. (laughing)

TT: I just wanna testify that your music moves me, and these days it takes alot to get me movin'. I can really feel it when you play, and that's what rock and roll is all about.

CC: Obviously, we're not really in it for the money. If we were, we'd be playing Top Forty crap or something.

Ryan: I'm the best looking guy in the band.

TT: Sorry Ryan, but Deano's my favorite SPITFIRE.

CC: Me and Deano just started jogging.

TT: Why?

CC: So we can get sexier.

Deano: Maybe then I might be able to get laid again.

CC: We want to sit on the beach this summer and be beautiful bronzed Adonises!

TT: That sounds like a good idea. It's very important to keep in shape. I hope I get the chance to see you two on the beach this year.

Deano: I gotta tell you, it's not workin' for me yet.

TT: During your big Northeast American tour, what was your favorite band that you played with?

CC: The Trash Brats were great, they were our

favorites on that tour.

TT: Do you have any last words you'd like to say to your readers?

Deano: Remember your spirit, live for today, and love forever.

CC: I can't really think of anything right now, except happy birthday Terri! (another round of "happy birthday's" followed)

TT: Thanks! Gee, guys, I love you all!

Deano: We love you too, Terri! +



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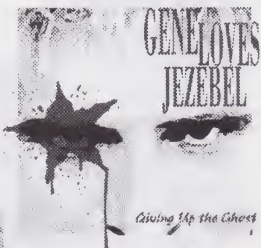
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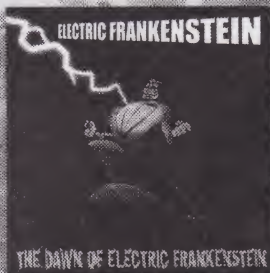


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FRIENDS THAT LAST: GREAT PLAINS' LENGTH OF GROWTH (1981-1989)

Hard to imagine hundreds - much less thousands, or millions - of rock'n'roll denizens waiting intensely and impatiently for nearly a decade for someone to reissue the works of Columbus, Ohio's Great Plains (who?), but dammit, that's what I've been doing, and finally it's happened. Old 3C/TMIV's release of a super-cheap 2 CD set (which in itself is pretty hilarious) is twice as much as I could have hoped for and, aside from a curious omission ("Chuck Berry's Orphan"), it delivers the goods - 50 challenging songs that demonstrate that great rock and roll can be about anything under the sun.

Ron House (currently the pilot of Thomas Jefferson Slave Apartments) is certainly one of the most literate songwriters ever to rock a garage and, while that sounds like the kiss of death, believe me, it ain't. House is far from limited to big idears and esoteric references; he's as sharp as "barbarians" like the Replacements when it comes to good ol' rock and roll subjects like sex ("Physical Fact") and booze ("Long and Slow Decline") and rock and roll itself ("Letter to a Fanzine," which includes the philosophical refrain, "Why do punk rock guys/Go out with New Wave girls?"). More importantly, when a guy's reading and observation leads him to songs like "Rutherford B. Hayes" (about* being a big loser - and it mentions Woody Hayes, too!), "Martin Luther King and Martin Luther Drinking" (about a meeting between two of House's heroes), "Black Like Me" (about Panthers holed up with *Highway 61 Revisited*), "Fertile Crescent" (about the birth of civilization and...dancing), or "The Wind Blows, The Law Breaks" (about, well, the impulse to knock shit

down with a rock and roll song), and the songs are funny as well as smart, you know he's in no danger of being pretentious. As House sings in "Pretty Dictionary" (and the quote's also emblazoned on the CD's jacket), "Without a book in my hand/I'm a desperate man."

Speaking of desperate, House's vocal style recalls that of a drunk with morning-after DTs and fucked-up tonsils who just keeps nattering on and on and on, until you suddenly realize he's making more than sense. He sometimes makes Richard Hell sound like Al Green, but like another gutter-wiseass with a

wet-rat mewl named Bob Forrest, his conviction and humor (which applies more than liberally to himself) force you to identify with him. Where he moves past Hell and Forrest is when his volume and

PHIL OVEREEM

desperation swell with the climactic chorus-tides of many of the stronger songs on the collection (listen to, for example, "The Wind Blows, the Law Breaks") - no matter how many beers he's downed in the studio, or how many existential laments he's gobbled up with his eyes and brains, he never seems alienated from his own emotions. I don't know about you, but that's the rock and roll shit I NEED. Right now, man.

For many of you out there, words and vocals aren't nearly enough. What about the music? Well, Great Plains didn't really power-chord or punk-rawk like Thomas Jefferson Slave Apartments do. Occasionally yeah, but more often, driven by organ and folk rawky rhythm chords, they're straight out the *Nuggets* garage. They're not exactly hooky - if they were, House's attack'd be a lot easier sell to the tire-kickers; if they were, though, they'd be a whole lot less scruffy and charming - but, upon repeated listening, catchy bits and pieces rise up through the modest production and implant themselves in your memory. One way to look at it is they were either incapable of, or maybe even conceptually disinterested in, dramatic "rock" structures; if you're familiar with House's take on the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, the latter possibility isn't that far-fetched at all. Folks, it's just very honest three-chord rock and roll...with some intelligent, hilarious, and dark words attached. What are you waiting for?

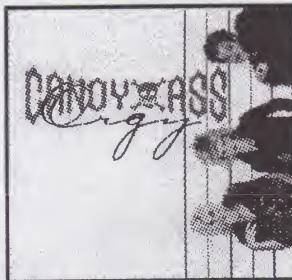
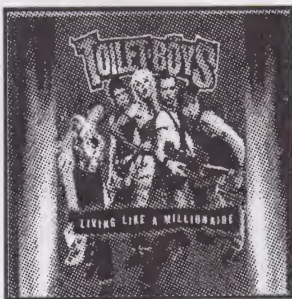
A special treat here is the song "Dick Clark," which - I think - is the greatest song ever written by a front man to his band. Admittedly, I don't know that many to begin with, but it's positively inspirational. They want to be on the auction block, "naked at the buy, sell, and trade," but he frees them from the need for fame. They want to throttle him, but he they still follow his orders: "Leave it to me/Let Dick Clark sort out the details." Really, it's the story, I'm sure, of a thousand bands within this collection's chronological scope, pre-indie rock termites infesting the mantle above Reagan's living room fireplace. Almost brings a tear to yer eye....

Great Plains reminds me of a lot of my friends: they aren't initially easy to get next to (too many people craft their personas for easy social access, anyhow), but with time and familiarity they become positively addictive. And...they last. A big salute to Old3C/TMIV for giving Great Plains the chance to. +

(Note: Most of House's songs are about* a helluva lot more than they're about, if you get my drift.)

Check out my web page (*The First Church of Holy Rock and Roll*: <http://holyrockeroll.webprovider.com>) if you get a chance.

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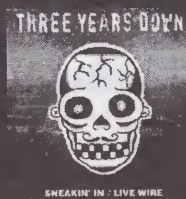
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IT'S ALL OVER 'CEPT FOR THE INVESTIGATION

I was reading the paper online while the television droned on, with closed captioning by someone, and looked to see if Gore had conceded yet. The ticker said he would address the nation later. It was then amended to reveal that he'd suspended the recount measures. So the longest and boring-est mutual handjob is continuing to roll its crusty trail down the videotaped tracks. Al Gore props himself up as Cerberus, one head between his legs, one head jutting towards 2004, and the other whispering in its own ear. "It's a great idea Al, just go off in the wilderness, put on the elder statesman blue knit hat, and stand next to a tree." Yes, the heads nod in succession while the travesty that is/was this election continues. This naked shrimp grab contains a condemnation of the entire process, letting the American people know that they have no real say in the proceedings unless they wave a bizarre, heartfelt magic-marked sign over the shoulder of a correspondent. A Fox news anchor was accused of running down another journalist over a Tallahassee parking lot dispute. I say bring it on, let us all genuflect before our latest one-term mediocre president. The second son of the second president to occupy the office, and if ya dig up that guy's inauguration speech it's a real barn burner. It's a real throwdown, trying to solicit funds

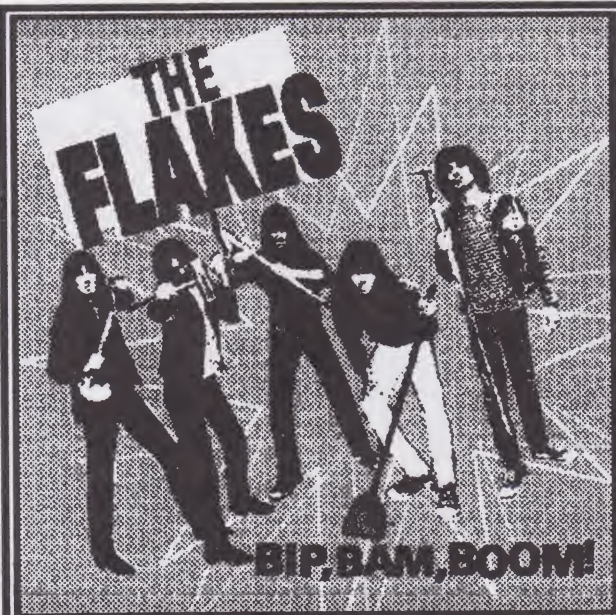
for a new observatory while lamenting that the lack of a world class observatory on this hemisphere belittles American dominance. Perhaps this could be seen as the first pitch for NASA, or perhaps we will discover that this latest silly putty president will turn out to be the color section of the Sunday paper, 'cos everyone knows that silly putty works best on the comics.

G.W. Bush, president, yet another in a long line of office managers to occupy the office. He claims to have a mantle, a market share there, but he's gonna sit down in the chair and spin around once and wink at his wife, and then it's gonna

JIM HAYES

sandbag him. What do you do in that job? It ain't like Texas where he can just make phone calls and make things happen; no sir, it's a big deal, the largest company in the universe, and you're the face. When in doubt in Texas, just make sure you got an execution lined up, 'cos even if you cant please all of the people all of the time an execution is a great way to please a bunch.

Meanwhile, back in Austin, G.W. grabs the rostrum like a frat boy transplanting a varsity cheerleader after the big win. He tells me that he's going to work hard to earn my respect 'cos he's the president of all Americans, even the ones that have funny accents or, at least, the right to be educated. Then G.W. gazes into the abyss and pulls out the throaty tome of old Tommy Jefferson, the guy with the great left hook and slaves, and he talks about reconciliation. And then I think back to Al, the man who called Zappa a genius, and I say to myself, "that's rough, man, losing the presidency by 500 votes, and then the Supreme Court says we don't gotta count everyone, that's like rough, dude." Meanwhile I studiously avoid voting — it leads to jury duty in Fulton County, and my lawyer told me it's best not to avoid a summons in Georgia, as they will come for you. So I dont vote, I dont participate. I'll let the rest of you good people decide, and I'll just live with it, I'll deal — I dont care. When folks inquire as to my voting habits my stock answer remains: I dont participate in "sham transferences of bourgeois power," which sounds really deep and is better than admitting that jury duty sucks.



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HIT SQUAD

Yeah, but he's our president now. That's cool, because for the next four years I can use lines like "he's your president, you elected him." I just think he's a moron and the thought that he's at the bridge disturbs me. Over the years my political views have gotten more and more conservative — not "law & order" conservative, just fiscally conservative. I just think that G.W. is some frat boy and that the world is gonna blow fucking up while he's in charge. Oh, great. What's his position on the Falun Gong? He stands in the lobby of the White House having the traditional coffee before the gig, before Bill's last telegraph ride down memory lane, sipping mocha java. Then he nudges Bill and says "so what's, like, the coolest secret you've learned so far?"

The wheel of the fortunate spins so that poor G.W. can have a chance — he mimes the words "Bugs Bunny" after the US and Ns are on the board. I'm not sure which advisor G.W. is gonna call on when there's a recession in the Spring. It's coming down already, with dot coms laying off executives and advertisers going full throttle with the demotions. I don't think it will be a serious Depression, but I do think that a market correction is underway. Remember Priceline dot com, where you could name your own prices for things — well, their stock went from \$160 to \$2. I wonder who named that particular price.

At first that 1.3 trillion dollar tax cut sounds awful nice, but let's think about it. How 'bout this real-time picture scenario: the average American gets a grand back from their big tax rebate, takes a drive down the interstate, and hits a huge pothole. A pothole that

would have been filled last year, but since the cutbacks, the rollovers, and the split shares have eliminated funding, the pothole remains. The average American pays \$800 for front end damage and \$400 to rent a car. The tax rebate ends up leading to a \$200 deficit and another credit card loan. What happens is that local municipalities have to increase their taxes to make up for the lack of federal revenue. When Christine Todd Whitman lowered taxes in Jersey, Jersey responded by upping property taxes. That's G.W.'s plan, folks. He'll cut federal taxes and local taxes will rise.

Colin Powell's on the screen. He's the Secretary of State-designate and he says he wants the first line in his bio to say he was the first African-American Sec of State — and he wants that repeated again and again. I pepped up my ears. After that sentence, they'll say he was also a gung ho punish-'em-now idiot. All of G.W.'s people are just Firestone retreads from his dad's stunningly successful pat-on-the-back presidency. The folks that were too stupid to get anywhere when ole bumblebee-head Reagan was in charge instead joined Bush's team, 'cos there they could shine. Now, after eight years out of power, they just wanna get back in there and turn a few screws, shake a few fists, and flex their muscles. Don't worry, G.W., we'll protect ya. At the very least, for the next four years all I have to do is click on the tube and I'll have the opportunity to make a snotty comment or a witty remark. What will the right-wing talk show hosts talk about now? Hopefully about the coming investigation. Rancorous hearings about every cabinet member, a special counsel to investigate why Colin Powell's son is probably going to head the FCC. It sounds real cozy, huh? Meanwhile, I'd like to be selling paper shredders in DC now. I hear that's a hot ticket.

Jim Hayes, 12/20/00, Atlanta, Georgia

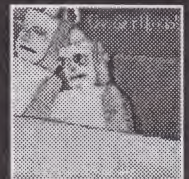
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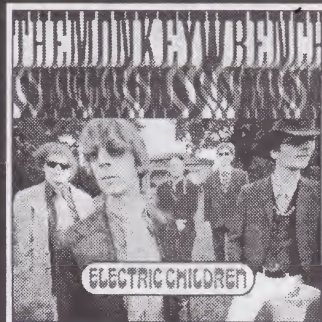
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ladies and gentlemen... ...the \$SWINGIN' UTTERS\$

Without sounding horrendously clichéd, the story of San Francisco's beloved Swingin' Utters is the story of many a punk band — drunken kids get together to play some of their favorite tunes, write some of their own, play shows for years in relative anonymity, then, through hard work, perserverance and talent (not to mention some heavy schmoozing on the part of one of their guitarists) climb to the top of the heap.

One of the first bands to gain wide recognition for playing the '90's version of '70's-style Britpunk, the Utters have always been a bit more than your average band of spike-heads slavishly aping "Janie Jones" and "If the Kids are United." In fact, they've have always had a strong California element to their music — as much Social Distortion as Social Chaos, they come from a long line of bands with a distinct sound formed by a wide range of influences forced through the filter of five guys who've been around long enough to know what good music sounds like. With the addition of notorious Karaoke fiend/Golden Voice of the Gimme Gimmes Spike Slawson on bass after the recording of the fantastic *Five Lessons Learned*, the Swingin' Utters opened a new chapter in their history. Brett and I caught up with Johnny Bonnell, Darius Koski, Max Huber, Greg McEntee and Spike at SF's Motor Studios as they were putting the finishing touches on their new self-titled LP last spring. Released on Fat Wreck last fall, it continues the Utters' tradition of beery singalongs. A little more straightforward and "punk" than *Five Lessons*, it nevertheless continues on in the more folk-oriented direction they branched into on that album. Needless to say, if you liked the Utters before, you don't need to worry about not enjoying this album.

- Dave Johnson



interview by Dave Johnson and Brett Mathews
photos by Brian Archer



J O H N N Y

Dave: You guys started out in Santa Cruz, right?

Johnny: It started out back in '88 with me and Greg, the drummer over there and Kevin, our old bass player and we just did covers for two or three years. Then Darius joined.

Max: You had a guitar player before Darius, right?

Johnny: Yeah, his name was Eric, and we just did punk rock covers.

Dave: Did you just play bars and have fun?

Johnny: Mainly parties.

Max: The first time I saw them, they played my party right after I moved out from D.C. It was Johnny, Greg, Kevin and Eric, and they played party I had at my house for St. Patrick's Day.

Darius: That was like a month before I joined the band — in like '90.

Max: I don't remember you guys playing any originals then — were you?

Johnny: No. We sucked!

Max: I liked 'em though! It was, y'know, real simple shit, but I liked it.

Dave: What was the first song you ever played together?

Johnny: Lemme think..."Clash City Rockers," or "Suburban Home," something like that. We used to do *tons* of Clash songs.

Brett: So what were you guys called at that point?

Johnny: Johnny Peebucks and the Swingin' Utters.

Brett: Dave and I were actually talking about this earlier, and I know it's one of the worst questions ever and I swore I'd never ask it *[despite the fact that you also asked it of American Steel, Brett — Dave]* but the name is so *off the wall*. I understand the Johnny Peebucks thing, and you should probably explain that, but where did the Swingin' Utters come from?



G R E G

Johnny: Well, one of my friends had this cat that had big tits and they swung back and forth...and well, I dunno...it was like this lame idea we came up with —

"Uhh...'Swingin' Utters! That's a good name for a band..."

Max: You *had* to be wasted

Dave: Especially with the t's instead of the d's...

Johnny: It's sort of like a mistake; a joke gone wrong, and we've been cursed with it ever since.

Brett: Do you wanna explain the "Peebucks"?

Johnny: Just drank too much one night and pissed my pants. The next morning I went down to Taco Bell and the lady was like, "Oh! These dollar bills are all wet! Did you go swimming earlier this morning?" And I was all, "No, no...I pissed my pants." My friend that was with me kept calling me "Peebucks" all day. I dunno...I thought it would be a neat name.

Dave: At what point did you end up in the band then, Max?

Max: I guess it was in '92. Like May 21st or some shit like that.

Brett: Were they still doing covers?

Max: No, at that point they had some originals. They had like 20 tunes. When they asked me to play with them, I went up to Darius' house and just played. I never "joined" the band.

Dave: Are you still trying out?

Max: [laughs] Yeah, I'm not official. I get salary. I get a thousand dollars a year. Anyway, so my first live show — my first show with them — was their biggest show ever. Dollar night at the Catalyst. [laughter] On Thursday nights they had like three bands for three bucks — no, it was dollar night and you got to see three bands. We



D A R I U S

opened up, and then this band called the Butchers — not the Butchers that anyone might know — these guys dressed up like pirates. And some world beat band with like a white rap guy. I was fucking stiff as a microphone stand. I was *so* nervous. It was packed! Those dollar nights brought in like 700 people.

Dave: At that point were you sporting the "I'm gonna audition for the Casualties look?"

Max: No, no, no...

Dave: Did that come later?

Max: That came later. Well, it came before and later.

Dave: What was up with that? Because now you're the epitome of sly suaveness.

Max: When I was a kid I all the punk rock I listened to was British. When I was a teenager I had Liberty spikes and Mohawks and all that kinda jazz. After I joined the band I really got back being just *punk* again, y'know? Looking punk and playing punk rock and the whole nine yards. It was *really* fun — in my early twenties I relived my teens all over again the way I would have preferred to have done it — playing in a band, touring around the world. But then, after awhile, it's a total pain in the ass, like, my hair was so fucking big; I had *huge* Liberty spikes; *huge* Mohawks. Our roadie John was mostly in charge of taking care of my hair! [laughter] I was leeping on my face and everything so I wouldn't have to re-do it in the morning. So right about the time Johnny got married I cut my Mohawk off and just kept my hair short.

Darius: All right! Enough about hair! Next question! [laughter]

Max: Darius is bummed 'cause he doesn't have any!

All: OHhhhhh!

Brett: At some point did you guys just say, "All right, we're sick of doing covers; let's



S P I K E

write some originals?"

Darius: Early '90 we had our first original.

Max: When I first joined the band, most of our shows were like bars in Santa Cruz, and we'd play like two sets a night. In '94 we did our first tour, and our first album came out in '95.

Brett: When did that first 7" come out?

Max: '92. The first two came out in '92.

Brett: Did Nicky Garratt see you guys around?

Max: No, I contacted him. I don't even remember how all that went down. Katon had something to do with it. At the time, the UK Subs were my favorite band, so we were just so psyched to just meet him and talk to him. The first day we went there, he gave me a pin from the UK Subs' '78 Polish tour. It was fucking rad meeting him.

Brett: So did you record demos, or did you just go in and record the album?

Max: I think he was really into the idea that Lars was gonna do it. I think he'd maybe come and seen us play a few times — by then we were already doing all right; playing at Gilman a lot, doing shows in the City. When he heard Lars was gonna produce the record, I think that's when he got really into it.

Brett: So you guys did the New Red record, toured behind it and then Fat approached you guys?

Max: Once again, it was me. I went down to BFD (Bay Area alt-rock station Live 105's annual festival show at the massive Shoreline Amphitheatre) with Lars. He introduced me to Fat Mike — I didn't know him — and Mike said, "Hey, I like your band. Maybe we should do a 7" for Fat." At the time, I was more interested in Epitaph, but then Epitaph was just being so lame about giving us the runaround. Some people at Epitaph were really into us and wanted to sign us, while others were kinda



M A X

like... "Ehhh..." We were getting mixed signals, so I was just like, "Fuck it, I'd rather be on Fat anyway." I went to Mike — saw him at a show or something — and said, "You know what? Fuck the 7". Let's just do an album!" And he was like, "Cool!"

Darius: It's mainly just Max schmoozing people and getting away with it. I mean, I couldn't do anything like that. I don't think any of us could.

Brett: It seems kinda weird — nothing against Fat; Fat's a cool label — but it makes sense why you guys would go to Nicky Garratt with the sound that you guys have, but at the time you signed to Fat, they were way more narrow-minded musically than they are now.

Max: Yeah, it kind of surprised us, too, but that was his idea behind signing us. After he signed us, he signed a succession of bands that were stylistically different. But at the time, Epitaph and Fat were the two best labels — maybe Lookout! because of Green Day — but most of the Lookout! bands I wasn't that interested in. Plus, it was East Bay and Fat was right in the City. We'd been around Europe already supporting Rancid, and Fat and Epitaph were the only labels whose records were *everywhere*, in *every* store you went to. If they were gonna have any punk rock records at all, they'd be Fat and Epitaph.

Dave: Yeah, I noticed that in Europe as well.

Max: You *know* it's gonna be the best distribution you're gonna get. We'll go out and tour our asses off, we just wanna make sure our records are available. With Nicky — and I love him, and New Red Archives is a great label — but their records weren't *anywhere*. They *still* aren't. I think it's mostly mail-order. Nicky actually helped get us onto Fat. He went to Mike and said, "Look, these guys are hard workers." He *likes* his bands to go on to bigger labels because that means the whole back catalog will sell more and he'll make more money. He likes the idea of [N.R.A.] being like a stepping stone.

Dave: So what ended up happening with Kevin leaving the band?

Johnny: He was working to become a teacher and figured it was probably better that he started now, before it was too late — which we all understood. He was like, "I gotta get a teaching job," and he got one. Now he teaches in San Francisco.

Max: He wasn't into touring anymore. He always used to be the guy who wanted to



[If you ever get a chance to witness Spike's rendition of "Hello" by Lionel Ritchie, don't blow it.]

Spike: I don't think so.

Max: Well, Spike sang around the office all the time, and Chris and Joey knew he could sing.

Brett: So at some point Mike approached you guys?

Max: Mike approached me. We were gonna have John play bass, but at the time Social Distortion was on tour with their biggest album, so that was pretty much out of the question, because we needed a full-time bass player. I mean, I liked Spike. Spike and I were friends for quite awhile prior. Spike's first show was at the Trocadero, opening for X at their first reunion show in like ten years.

Dave: I was so pissed I missed that.

Max: So talk about breaking him in in front of a crowd...

Brett: So what was that like?

Spike: The crowd was *so* dead.

Max: The crowd seemed so *old*. Then X came on and it was like [makes indescribably screechy crowd noise]. And *we'd* been selling out the Trocadero on a regular basis before that and had *insane* crowds. So we figured it'd be amazing. But mostly, we just played to get in free to the X gig. I mean, it was the first show of their reunion tour. It was the first time I'd ever heard somebody cheer for a guitar solo at a punk show. The crowd just went *nuts* for them!

Dave: Well, you're an occasional substitute

tour, and then he wasn't anymore.

Darius: He was so into the Punk Rock Ethic thing.

Max: But he was a hypochondriac — he always thought he was sick.

Darius: He'd be like, "I'm *totally* sick," and sit there and eat peanut butter and crackers all day long.

Max: And keep his window shut in his room.

Darius: You're sick? Really? That's weird.

It's because you're totally *malnourished*!

Max: But he left at a really bad time. We were right in the middle of a bunch of touring, so I had to become the bass player for a tour. We were opening for Social Distortion in Europe and I had to play bass.

Dave: So at that point, then you were doing an album. Did you [Max] play bass on *Five Lessons Learned*?

Max: John Mauer from Social Distortion played a lot of bass. We had six bass players on that record. Actually...I *did* play bass on that record.

Dave: So, at that point, did you decide to cash in on the success of Me First and the Gimme Gimmes, get Spike in the band, and then be able to sticker your records "Featuring Member of Me First and the Gimme Gimmes"?

Max: Actually, Mike came to me and said, "Spike's sitting around," and I said "YES SIR!" [laughter]. Spike's a guitar player, but if you can play the guitar, bass is fucking easy.

[A chorus of "Yes sir, Fat Mike!" echoes around the room, followed by giggling.]

Brett: So what was the rise from the Mail

Room like?

Spike: The [Fat Wreck] mailroom was a rise from working at what used to be CD Presents. So that was a leg up.

Brett: Hey — did you work with Floyd?

Spike: Yeah, I did, at the tail end. He got hired while I was working there.

Brett: So you were working there and bumpin' around and ran into Mike all the time and said, "Hey, we should do like a cover band thing?"

Spike: He and Joey were kicking the idea round. I didn't know about it. He just called me over to the desk one day and asked if I wanted to participate, and I said "Yes sir, Fat Mike sir." [laughter]

Dave: Had he seen you do karaoke before?

Spike's first show was at the Trocadero, opening for X at their first reunion show in like ten years.

We don't really practice unless we're getting ready for a record or a tour, so [Max living in New York] doesn't really matter.

• d a r i u s •

imime Gimme, right Max?

Max: I've played with them twice.

Dave: I saw one, what was the other one?

Max: One at the Covered Wagon and I played the Wammies. And at that show, even I was wasted!

Spike: Oh, that was the one with the substitute drummer, too — Mark Mortensen.

Max: And the other show, I was psyched to play with Dave. I knew all the songs — it's easy to learn those songs 'cuz you already know 'em — so I was *really* psyched. As soon as we go on stage, Dave's *totally* wasted and it just stinks. I mean, we were ending songs right in the middle! But it's total fun to play with those guys.

Brett: It seems like the last two records really showed an evolution. Are you paralleling the evolution of say the Clash or the Pogues?

Dave: What did the liner notes to the Youth Brigade split say? That you're "post-Pogues"?

Max: I don't think it's like that.

Darius: I don't think there's really any *one* influence.

Max: One of the big differences is that on the first record, Darius pretty much wrote the whole album. On the last record, there was a bigger mix. I think on this record, we kind of have a formula for writing, and it's gonna sound different from anything we've ever done.

Dave: What direction is it going?

Darius: Well, it's more like the last record.

Max: But I think the writing's better. I think we're just getting better and better at that. It's got more punk tunes than the last record.

Brett: So Max, you moved to New York — how does that affect the band?

Darius: You know, we don't really practice unless we're getting ready for a record or a tour, so it doesn't really matter.

Max: I had *one* day rehearsing for this record — to show Greg the drums — and then we were recording the next day.

Brett: So you're in New York doing a bunch of other stuff. When you come back, does it make you really hungry to do this?

Max: I'm *always* really hungry to record or go on tour. I never need any kind of inspiration to do that. I completely love *everything* about it; listening to it, playing it, recording it. To be honest, being here is kind of a drag because I hate couch surfing and I have a *place* in New York, but as far as seeing my friends and being with the band and recording, it's been awesome.

Brett: What was the reason for the move?

Max: I've wanted to be there for years. A lot of things happened simultaneously — it was kind of like the stars were aligned and it was time for me to go. I'm really happy there.

Dave: Do you have another band there?

Max: Yeah, I've got two other bands there.

Brett: What're the other two New York bands?

Max: One's like pop/rock...I don't even know what you call it — alternative or whatever — probably stuff that most Swingin' Utters fans would hate. It's not *punk*. Everybody in the band who's in the band has listened to and loves punk rock, but it's not about punk rock at all. For me, I can't imagine doing multiple punk rock bands. For me, it would just be pointless. All the songs I like that I write that are punk, I give to the Utters, and everything



else goes elsewhere. The other band that I do is a bit more punky — it has female vocals and is a bit new-wavey, maybe. The bands in New York; they're not underground at all. I mean, we have management and they'll probably be a major-label thing. The Swingin' Utters is my underground punk thing.

Dave: How do you feel about that?

Max: I'd rather be in a tour bus than a van. If the band was getting paid the way I would like to be paid, we'd be flying in personal jets. I mean, punk rock for me was *never* about not making money. I mean, it wasn't about making money either, but fuck it, we all grew up listening to rock 'n' roll.

name or something like that.

Max: There's a gamble in anything you do, but I think the music's good enough that we won't really stand a chance of getting hurt too badly.

Brett: So what happened with the Fizzolis? Why don't you explain that?

Max: Fizzoli's is like this Italian restaurant chain in the Midwest.

Spike: It's like the Hardee's...the Roy Rogers of Italian food.

Max: Exactly.

Spike: They've got the tomato on the Italian flag that says "Fizzoli's", and you could only find 'em in like...New Jersey and Ohio.

"One Bourbon, One Scotch and One Beer", we did "Born to Run" by the Boss — we had to do Bon Jovi and the Boss, of course.

Spike: We did Eddie Money

Max: "Two Tickets to Paradise". We did "Workin' for the Weekend" by Loverboy. We wanna do another show — it was me, Spike, Chris Shiflett and Mike Fritz. We kind of rotated bass and guitars and stuff.

Dave: So Spike, how was being on the Dwarves record?

Spike: It was fun. I've done it twice. It was fun.

Dave: So now we've gotta plug Greg. What's Greg up to?



Darius: If you're trying *not* to make money, you're a fucking *chump*.

Max: We'll always write what we wanna write, but if someone's willing to market your art and pay you a lot of money for it? You gotta be *retarded* to not take it. I mean, at least take the money and give it away! These companies have *so* much money...they don't deserve to keep it all!

Dave: On the other hand, there's the major-label gamble — your band ends up falling through the cracks; your band has to break up because you're in debt to the label and they own the rights to your

Max: We always thought it was funny as hell. That was the whole idea. We wanted to do, like, a Jersey band. I mean, when I was a kid, I always thought Thin Lizzy was *from* New Jersey! I didn't know they were Irish! So we just figured we'd do covers of songs we thought Rockers in New Jersey would wanna hear.

Brett: So what songs did you guys play?

Max: We did "Runaway" by Bon Jovi, "The Boys Are Back in Town" by Thin Lizzy, "We're an American Band", we did George Thorogood's version of John Lee Hooker's

Spike: Greg's now playing with Romeo's Dead.

Dave: What's that all about?

Greg: They just called me up. I was looking for something to do the same week that they called me. We just kept practicing every once in awhile, then we played the Covered Wagon with the Vibrators.

Brett: So it's been a couple months, but you guys went back and played Gilman Street. I mean, you guys did a *lot* of time at Gilman Street years ago — was it cool

to go back there and play for your old fans or whatever?

Max: Actually, that Gilman show was kind of a disappointment. The last few times we played Gilman, we just knew it was gonna be slammed and sold out. The last show was kind of mediocre.

Dave: There was some other show that was that day...

Max: We wanted to go back and do it, but it was kind of a disappointment for the band. Gilman always had the *highest* energy levels when we played there. There were kids all over the stage; losing at least five pounds of sweat...

Dave: That was the same night as the Green Day show [a secret gig at Bottom of the Hill] wasn't it? I remember thinking, 'Damn...I wanna go to both shows, but I guess I'll go see Green Day, just because it's kind of this silly, exclusive thing.'

Max: We were kind of the house band at Gilman in like '94 — we used to play there like once a month, every month.

Brett: I used to go see you guys in like '93 or '94 supporting the Hellbillys who were supporting somebody else, and it's like the Hellbillys are still one or two bands from the top of the bill — how is it looking back and seeing the people who are still there?

Max: Everything has a time and a place, and everything has to end at some point. Like, it's sad sometimes when things stretch on. As lame as it is when a club like the Trocadero closes, in some ways it'd kinda gnarly where it captured a lot of great shows in San Francisco; a great venue; cheap concerts. Just like Gilman was *amazing* for a long time. It's important to have a place for kids to go see shows, but for me, personally, I can't keep doing the same thing. I have *no* idea who plays though now days. I don't think we'll ever play there again, though.

Brett: It was such an enormous part of who you guys became...

Max: Oh yeah! Totally! But it was *such* a different time, too. I mean, all the bands who

were regulars there at the time were all bands I was familiar with and most of 'em kicked ass. It was us and AFI and Screw 32 *always* together, and it was always cool. And the Trocadero, too.

Dave: The Trocadero shows were *always* so rad.

Max: That probably had the biggest impact on our band of anything, because they put on these big-ass shows for *free*, they'd pay the bands, they'd get us free beer, and they wouldn't charge anybody to come in! It was fucking amazing! Those shows took us from being able to play for like, a hundred people, to being able to seal out some of the bigger clubs in San Francisco — just because of those gigs.

Brett: So who's writing the songs when

**I'd love to see a
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you bring in the strings? Or is that just what the song evolves into once it's brought into the circle?

Max: I think Darius had it in mind when he wrote the songs. I think there's viola, cello and violin, maybe?

Darius: Yeah.

Max: Darius plays the violin and viola, and then we brought a guy in to play cello. Me and Darius write completely differently, though.

Brett: So Spike, before you were in the band, what was your impression?

Spike: Well, at that distributor I used to work at, we got that 7", and I thought, "This sounds like a really good D.O.A. song, but

different." [laughter] I mean, I liked 'em, but punk is kinda on and off for me — it should never be more important than your world, y'know? One of my friends said that it's a mental ghetto, and that's the best description of it. It's a new set of rules that people impose on themselves.

Max: For something that's supposed to be as open-minded as it is, it's really one of the more narrow-minded forms of music. A lot of bands, when they bring in strings or accordion, get laughed at. Fortunately, a lot of our fans like what we do.

Spike: But that's the opposite reason of why I liked the Utters. I mean, around '94, everyone wanted to be the Archers of Loaf. You've gotta have confines. Without confines, you're an indierock band. To progress and grow *inside* of those confines is cool, and it's exciting to hear. It's not just masturbation.

Max: Well, especially with this band — you have the same four or five guys, you put the songs in, and they'll come out *Utters*, y'know? Everybody in the band is *really* concerned with melody and harmonies and the song. It's *never* gonna come out like free form jazz. Or like Black Flag; how they just became *garbage* in the late '80's. I don't think Greg Ginn's a good guitarist.

Dave: Well, once you get to *In My Head*, there's "Drinking and Driving" and that's about it.

Max: My point being, is that we're not a noise band — not that that's a bad thing; there are some good bands that are like that — but that's how there are going to be confines on our music. We may change things; there may be some country stylings or whatever, but we'll *always* be melodic.

Dave: So what about you guys, and maybe Rancid before you and the Dropicks after you, spearheading this sort of "'77 Streetpunk Revival" thing? How do you guys feel about that?

Spike: Well, there's something boring about a band perfecting a certain genre. I mean, they've gotta be fuckin' bored doing that.

Max: I think it's cool that there're band who got an inspiration to do more of a '70's style punk from listening to us, Rancid, the Dropicks, or whoever, I'm glad to see people playing music, and to see kids up there playing, but to be perfectly honest with you, that's the music you play on your first

record. All of those bands, if they stick with it, they're not gonna keep making those same albums. You *have* to grow.

Spike: It's the same thing with a really good rock band. If they don't change and do different shit, then there's two records — max!

Dave: Which is why hardcore bands only last two records!

Spike: Except for SSD...

Max: Some people just don't have another album in them. At the same time, you never would have had Rush making a Ramones record. It just never would have occurred to 'em. I'm not saying their music is any *good*, but you play simple punk because that's what you're capable of.

Spike: I mean, punk has become commercial enough that people are as afraid of looking different inside the punk scene as they would be in any other scene, y'know?

There's no sense of urgency anymore to so many bands, and if there is, it's generally about the wrong things. I'd love to see a passionate band once in awhile, instead of an ironic band — and I'm one to talk, but...A passionate band — even if it was something like Verbal Assault where the guy cried onstage — which is pretty fucking lame — but still, he cried onstage because he was talking about...like, "How kids need to unite!" or some shit. [howls of laughter] There was a sense of urgency, you know?

Brett: They were an awesome band.

Spike: I only saw 'em, I never got any of their records, — and plus, he cried! [laughter]

Brett: So it seems like some of you are doing this family thing and getting straight jobs. Does that have an influence on the band?

Johnny: Well, it definitely influences us as far as touring goes — we don't tour as much anymore.

Spike: The good thing about it is, that touring can be like this thing you enter into blindly. For homeless people like the US Bombs, it's the right thing to do [laughter], they're going into it blindly just because you wanna play shows. Which is a wonderful reason to play music — just playing so people can hear it. If you've got two kids in the band — there's gotta be a reason. It's gotta be a good tour with good guarantees. It's gotta *be* a job. And

that's a positive.

Max: But everybody has a different opinion. I'd be content pretty much year-round on the road. I can see both sides of the coin, but I completely love playing.

Brett: So we talked about major labels earlier — is that something that the Utters would consider?

Max: No, I don't think so. We're totally happy with Fat. There's no need for us to sign to a major. They'll let us put out records for the rest of our lives, if we want to. It would only be worth it if some major label came to us and said, "We're going to pay you five million dollars to sign." We'd be *retarded* not to take the money, but that's never gonna happen, so Fat's perfectly good. We were approached by a major before we talked to

We're totally happy with Fat. There's no need for us to sign to a major.

Fat and we turned 'em down. It wasn't political: for one, Fat was in San Francisco; we knew we could trust Mike; we thought it was a good business decision. It wasn't an anti-corporate *anything*. Because unless you're living in the woods, you're working with corporations. You're watching corporate television or eating corporate food, and it's just inescapable. There's no reason why bands should suffer because some 13-year-old who lives in his parents' suburban castle complains about it on the internet, y'know?

Dave: And writes a letter to *Maximumrocknroll*!

Max: Like, who *reads Maximumrocknroll*? That same 13-year-old kid that wrote the fucking letter and just wants to see himself in print and a few angry fifty year-olds! There are certain pitfalls to signing to a major, but there are also pitfalls to staying on an indie. Yeah, on a major, you run the risk of getting dropped, but you also may earn your one decent shot at the bigtime. Punk bands are gonna stay small. Not every band's gonna be

NOFX and not every band's gonna be Fugazi — that's a *rare* occurrence. You can count on one hand the bands that've made millions staying *completely* independent, without *any* radio.

Spike: All a major label is is bigger distribution network. It'd be better if there were more of 'em, though. The only reason I don't like majors is there's like *two* of 'em now. I don't like that sort of consolidation of power and wealth. If you get signed in the right way — if you're not an *idiot* — all that happens to you is that you have access to a major distribution network that would reach a lot more people.

Max: And you have a *lot* more money behind you. You have money to make a video and the money behind you to get it seen. I mean, MTV doesn't just look around for any video to play. Major labels pay *them* to get their videos on.

Dave: The other thing about being in a punk band on a major — when bands like Green Day and the Offspring broke, MTV was playing a *lot* more music on the air.

Spike: If you put something out there or start a business — which a band becomes unless you break up and become legendary like Op Ivy — any business is full of contradictions. If you're able to understand the contradictions and balance 'em out...

Max: We all hope that all these records are better than the last, and that we've progressed and that people like 'em more, because we'd hate to think we're going backwards in any way. It's weird, because *nobody* in the band knows what this record's going to sound like. Darius and I probably have the best idea, because it's all been done piece by piece, and I don't even know how to *play* half of Darius' songs, and he doesn't know how to play my songs. It's gonna be interesting when we go on the road.

Dave: So you just did all of the guitar parts on yours and Darius did all of the guitar on his?

Max: Pretty much. Darius did some overdubs on mine and I did some like his.

Dave: Did you try to play *like* Darius?

Max: That was one thing that was kinda weird, It was kinda lame, because one of the cool things about our band is that Darius and I play differently, so it added something to the songs — but nobody's gonna notice it; you won't notice it. *We'll* notice it, but that'll be it. †

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TODAY'S EMPIRES. TOMORROW'S ASHES

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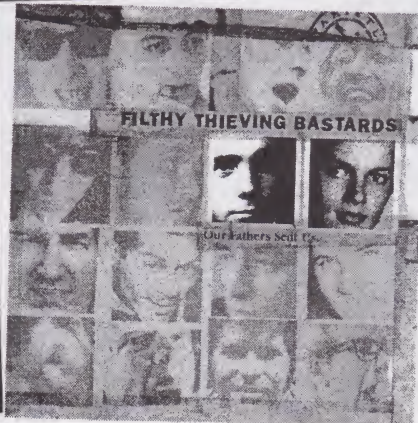


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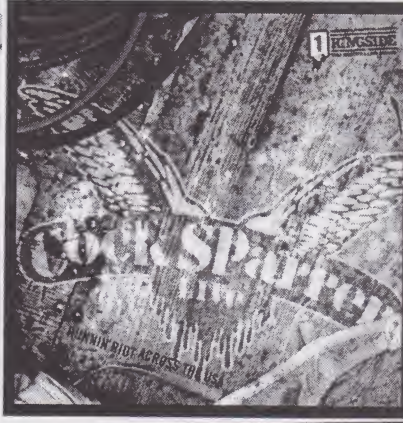


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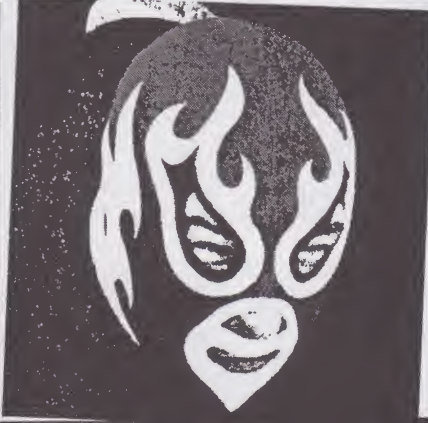
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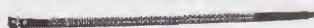


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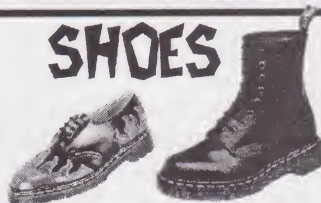
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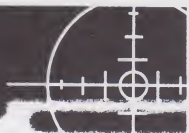
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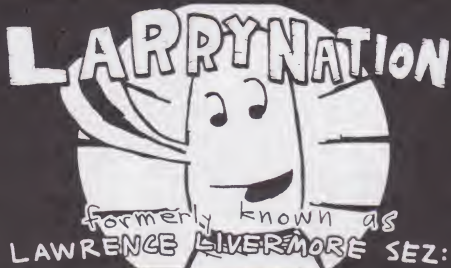


I got nothing, Ma, to live up to
- B. Dylan, 1964

Someone wrote to tell me that he'd just re-read my last column for *Maximum Rocknroll*. Said it was "sublime," that he'd "forgotten how writing could connect on a personal and grand scale, both at the same time." Not one to lightly ignore such high praise, I looked up the column (June 1994, Issue #133, in case you're interested). Reading it opened a window into the past, a past I've often chosen to forget.

I started by talking about the cruelty of a Midwestern spring (I was traveling through Ohio and Indiana at the time), how the buds would swell with promise and the flat, sullen earth turn green and warm and inviting, only to have it all snatched away with a sudden blast of wind from the north, carrying yet another snow storm and the mocking warning that winter might in fact never end.

Then, because it was an *MRR* theme issue, I had to talk about



the then-burning issue of major labels. A few months before, Green Day had signed to Warner-Reprise, and their success had set off a gold rush that saw punk rock bands who'd couldn't fill Gilman Street signing hefty major label contracts. When I wrote the column, Green Day were becoming a regular fixture on MTV, but they hadn't yet become the massive success they would later that year. I defended their decision, putting forth the viewpoint (always unpopular in an ideologically-driven zine like *MRR*) that it wasn't a black-and-white issue, that both good and crappy music came from both independent and major labels.

I was disappointed, of course, that Green Day had decided to leave Lookout, the independent label I was running at the time. Even though their success meant that Lookout would end up making far more money than I had ever imagined possible, it represented a significant failure for me personally. My goal with Lookout had been to grow with our bands so that they would never feel it necessary to "move on." I didn't feel the need to keep the label as some obscure cult thing, and even more than that, I didn't want it to serve as a farm team for the major labels.

I started Lookout because I felt the existing labels — both major and indie — were doing a lousy job. Not just in the quality of the music they put out, and in the way they remained oblivious to the brilliant, grass-roots music coming out of Gilman Street and the East Bay, but because

I thought their way of doing things was wasteful and tasteless. Why, I wondered, if you had a band capable of writing great songs and making a great record, did you have to spend millions of dollars on advertising, public relations agents, managers, lawyers, and just plain hype? Why did everyone, from president of the record company down to hack journalists at the music magazines, spout identical clichés and drivel about music that even my dog could tell was of no value but to the industry it supported?

I was probably a bit old to be that naive, but I genuinely thought there could be a better way. And for a good little while, there was. With no advertising except in a couple punkzines, with no promo or PR except word of mouth, with almost no radio and certainly no MTV airplay, Lookout doubled in size every year, using the simple formula of making good records with good bands, making them cheaply and selling them cheaply, and distributing them entirely through independent channels. I didn't blame Green Day for wanting to go to a major label. They were making a half-decent living on Lookout, and steadily becoming more well-known, but now they were being offered a chance at stardom. To kids who'd devoted most of their lives to music and who didn't have a whole lot of other career options, it must have seemed too incredible a chance to pass up. I can't honestly say I wouldn't have done the same thing.

Or would I? I really don't know. With the advantage of hindsight, having seen Green Day go on to sell some 20 million records, almost anyone would say that they'd made the right choice. In terms of what they'd wanted to accomplish, I'd have to agree. But what if it had been me, or my band, who'd had to make that choice? Would I have wanted to spend the next seven years in the media spotlight, headlining arenas and stadiums, getting mobbed by fans and groupies, making millions of dollars?

The prospect has its appeal, of course, but to be honest, I don't envy Green Day. I don't think I could have gone through what they have and still have my body and soul intact. As someone who's been writing and performing music for many years, sure, I'd like to have my songs heard by millions of people, but I don't think I could go through the process that most major artists have to. I wouldn't mind being as famous as Green Day or selling as many records, but I think the only way I could

handle it would be if the business end of things was handled the way Fugazi operates. Or, for that matter, the way Lookout operated in the early years, since Dischord was the label I had most modeled it on.

That's probably impossible, as almost anybody in the music industry will tell you. But I couldn't help wondering:

***I couldn't help wondering:
what if, for example, Green
Day hadn't left Lookout?***

what if, for example, Green Day hadn't left Lookout? What would that have meant for them and for me and for the whole music business? They'd probably have a lot less money, but maybe not as much less as you'd think. They almost certainly wouldn't have gone mega-platinum in 1994, but they might have eventually. Instead of becoming instant stars, they would have had to keep slogging away on DIY tours for years longer. Instead of rocketing straight to Number 1, "Dookie" might have sold only a few hundred thousand that first year, but it would have kept on selling. Today, seven years later, Green Day might — just might — be closing in on the kind of success they instead got all at once.

But what would be the advantage of doing it that way? A little more street cred, maybe? Being able to sing, "I did it my way" and really mean it? They could have just as easily gotten burned out from the endless touring and the so-so money and broken up five years ago, as happens to so many bands. I couldn't offer Green Day the things that Warner-Reprise could, so I didn't try all that terribly hard to persuade them not to go. And it probably wouldn't have mattered if I had.

For me, though, it was the end of a dream. I didn't realize it at the time, and in the next couple years Lookout grew so huge and so fast — thanks in large part to Green Day's success — that I barely had time to think about it. But I had wanted to run an independent label that was good enough and effective enough that no matter how big bands got, they would never feel they had to leave to get bigger, and I had failed. If I'd been smart, I would have left Lookout then, grateful for the experience I'd had and the money it had earned me. But instead I hung around for three more years, trying to ride the proverbial tiger that this suddenly multi-million dollar business had become. Just like it says in the old proverb, I was scared shitless of dismounting.

Though it's always dangerous to put yourself in someone else's place, I think that what was happening at Lookout in those years was similar — on a smaller scale, of course — to what was happening with Green Day. Suddenly we were no longer this cute little underground label being run out of some weird-guy's bedroom on a back street in Berkeley. People scented money and power and fame, and everybody wanted a piece of it. I was getting calls from *Rolling Stone* and *Spin*, having to engage on a daily basis with the promoters and PR agents and hustlers and scammers who, in my innocence, I'd figured Lookout would never have to deal with. And maybe I didn't have to do it that way. Like the song goes, "You could have said no if you wanted to." The only excuse I have is identical to that offered by most people who are suddenly thrust into the limelight: "It all happened so fast. I never had time to think about it."

By now, though, I've had plenty of time, not that it matters, because — blinding insight here — I can't undo the past. Maybe learn from it, maybe do things a bit differently next time. Assuming, of course, that there will ever be a next time. People always ask me when I'm going to start another record label, and invariably I reply, "Please take me out and shoot me before I do." Not that running a record label is the worst job in the world, not by a long shot, but I've had my turn. It's much more fun — and a lot easier — to sit on the sidelines and ridicule other people's bands and labels.

But I'm getting a bit flippant, a sure sign that I'm tired of talking about record labels, major or otherwise. Something else was happening in that spring of 1994, a crisis at *Maximum Rocknroll*, the magazine I'd been a part of for the previous seven years.

Two crises, actually. The first was Tim Yohannan's declaration that *MRR* was only going to cover "punk" bands. Fair enough. *MRR* had always been a punk zine. But who was to decide what qualified as "punk?" Despite much hemming and hawing, it soon became clear that the ultimate decision rested with Tim himself. Suddenly bands who had always relied on *MRR* to review and advertise their records were being told that they no longer qualified. They were too "pop" or "new wave" or "metal" or "experimental." It wasn't quite as drastic as

it sounds; I myself wouldn't have listened to most of the bands being rejected. But I was really uncomfortable with one person setting himself as the arbiter of what was punk, especially when *MRR* was a collective effort involving hundreds of volunteers.

Even more disturbing, though, was Tim's decision to cancel a column by one of *MRR*'s co-founders, Jeff Bale. Jeff, Tim argued, had become "too right wing" and "might as well be a Republican." (Of course, Tim used similar terms, or even worse ones like "fascist," to characterize almost everyone he disagreed with politically.) I myself was a lot more left wing at the time, and frequently disagreed with Jeff's opinions. But I couldn't understand why a magazine that purported to be the voice of the entire punk community didn't have room for at least a page or two of views that deviated from the prevailing ideology. If the *Wall Street Journal* could publish columns by a hardcore leftist like Alexander Cockburn, certainly *MRR* could afford to let Jeff's well-reasoned, often idiosyncratic, but mostly libertarian ideas be heard, even if they were harshly critical of the orthodox left.

I started wondering whether I still belonged at *MRR*. Although I mostly agreed with its political stance, it seemed like a matter of principle to support my fellow columnists. Besides, if Tim could unilaterally dump a key columnist, who was to say that I wouldn't meet the same fate if my own views ever strayed too far from what Tim felt they should be? It was a tough decision. I thought back to 1987, when I had published my first *MRR* column, when my band, the Lookouts, was interviewed, when they plastered my picture, complete with the

black eye I'd gotten from a non-lover of punk rock, all over the magazine. I had been completely thrilled. For years I'd followed *MRR*, both the zine and the radio show. When I was living 200 miles up north, every Tuesday night I'd drive up to the top of the nearby mountain because there and there alone I could pick up the Maximum Rocknroll radio show from faraway Berkeley.

I could hardly believe that I was now a full-fledged part of what was then the most important institution in all of punk rock. And as the years went by, I built up quite a connection with people all over the world who read my column. It was a rare month when I didn't get five or ten letters, and some of those pen-pals turned into lifelong friends. So when I considered leaving *MRR*, I turned first to my readers, asked them in print whether they thought I should stay or go. I got nearly 100 letters, nearly all urging me to stay. But though that was reassuring, even heartwarming, the reason they gave was basically that they would miss my column if I didn't. A few urged me to stay and "work within the system" to help make *MRR* a more liberal and tolerant place, but what they didn't understand was that "liberal" was a dirty word in *MRR*-land, a fact brought home in a lengthy letter from one Lefty Hooligan, the Robespierre of the punk rock revolution.

Lefty was absolutely scathing when he attacked me for being a "liberal" and a "reformist," and declared that *MRR* was "not a democratic institution." Maybe I was naive, but I had grown up thinking that liberalism, reformism, and democracy were good things, and here Lefty was spitting the words out of his mouth as though they

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HIT SQUAD

had left the foulest of tastes, in characteristic Leninist fashion. Other MRR staffers confided in me that they thought Lefty was a petty, malicious asshole and urged me to ignore him. But I knew that such people were representative of the direction MRR was headed in, and that sooner or later there was no longer going to be a place for me there. I could have carried on, I suppose, writing only about apolitical subjects — which Tim had urged Jeff to do — but by censoring myself in that way, I would have negated the whole point of becoming a writer in the first place.

In a larger sense, it all worked out for the best. MRR's censoriousness and rigidity alienated some of the most creative and passionate members of the punk community, and they responded by creating alternatives. *Punk Planet*, *HeartattaCk*, *Shredding Paper*, and *Hit List* all came into existence at least in part as a response to MRR's "great leap backward."

But though it's far healthier to have a variety of zines with contending viewpoints, I still feel a sense of loss, and a probably misplaced nostalgia for those days when it was possible to feel part of one big punk family. People join churches, political parties, fraternities, fan clubs, and yes, even punk scenes, because part of being human seems to be the need to feel a part of something larger than oneself. We start out in life alone and end up the same way, but spend most of our time in between searching for someone or something to join up with. If life is a process of constant disillusionment, the illusion that is perhaps hardest to kill is the notion that solidarity with others can somehow fill the emptiness within ourselves.

That's no slam against solidarity. I have nothing but contempt for those who, like Margaret Thatcher and the more nihilistic punks and anarchists, argue that there's no such thing as society, that individual freedom and expression is all that matters. But while society is one of humankind's noblest accomplishments, it can run roughshod, too. When strong, autonomous individuals voluntarily join with others in cooperative enterprises, they create a society with near-limitless potential. When weak, dependent individuals subsume their own beliefs and desires for the sake of belonging to something, anything, they create a society where even the masters are slaves.

All politics is personal, the hippies used to say, and what I'm trying to say here is ultimately personal. When it came time for me to leave MRR, when it came time for me to leave Lookout Records, when it came time for me to leave my home and my family and my country, I felt like the loneliest boy in the world. Once upon a time I was the kid who hung out on the edge of the playground, afraid of being bullied, afraid to join the other kids' games for fear of being laughed at or rejected. Through many years of hard knocks, wrong turns, foolhardy risks and downright blunders, I finally made my way to the heart of the playground, found hundreds of friends, found a sense of purpose and direction in life. I was part of not just an exciting social group, but a political and cultural mass movement. Once an embittered young rebel without a cause (or clue), I had gained a plethora of things to believe in and act upon.

And then I had to leave it all behind. Back out to the edge of the playground, hell, out of the playground completely, because everyone knows adults are supposed to be serious, to care only about work and responsibility. Okay, so I never did that good a job of impersonating an adult, but once again, that was one of the perennial joys of punk rock, the dream that we were all going to stay young until we died.

Too many dreams and too many people have died for that exuberant cry to still ring true. When Mr. *Maximum Rockroll* himself, Tim Yohannan, passed on, I was torn between grief over his premature death and anger at the way he'd grown old, the way his wisecracking, boyish charm had given way to bitter vendettas waged against anyone who deviated from *The World According To MRR*.


More than any other person, Tim embodied the punk rock universe that I had inhabited for much of my life, and when we fell from grace with each other, it was symbolic of how that universe no longer sufficed, how I was back out on my own, reliant on nothing but my own devices, in search once more for something, anything, to believe in. The last few years have been difficult ones, but in the words of Operation Ivy, I wouldn't have it any other way. I'd love to think that the original spirit of punk (or the hippies or the beatniks or any of history's questing visionaries) might be born again, and of course it will be, again and again, under different names and faces, but for new generations, not for me.

I guess I'm in imminent danger of becoming what I swore I'd never be: grown up. And you know what? There are worse things that could happen to a guy. Yes, dreams die hard, but die they must, because it's only when they're dead and buried that life can begin to come true.

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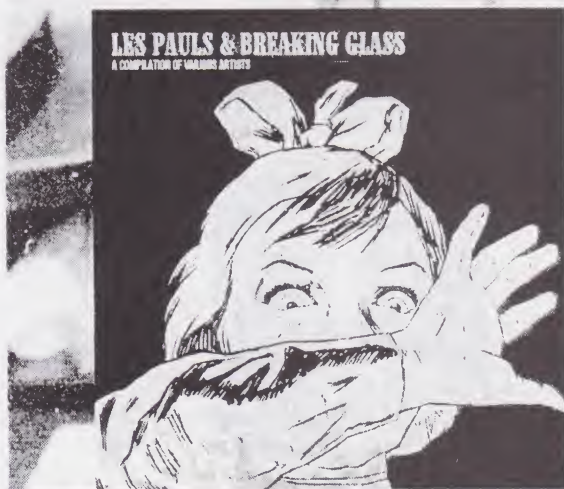
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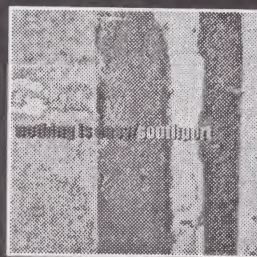
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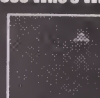
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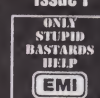
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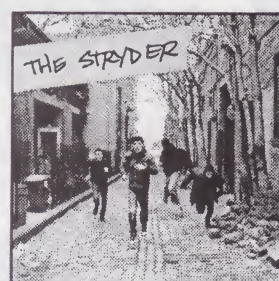
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I think Halloween should have the same status as the big retail holidays — a day off from school or work. That extra time to get the pumpkin carved or a costume ready would be welcome. The great thing about Halloween is that it is the one holiday where parents don't get to tell their children what to wear and make them sit in a room full of people who make them uncomfortable; where everyone has to make small talk and use more than one fork to eat. On Halloween, the kids get to decide what they are going to wear and where they are going to go, while their parents follow, or even stay at home. Sadly, trick-or-treating is frowned upon when you're over the age of fourteen, and there usually aren't parties and costume parades at work. There is, however, a Halloween tradition in the Bay Area that is not suitable for the little ones: the Cramps' annual show in San Francisco.

I have been going to their Halloween shows almost every year since 1989. Things haven't changed much over the years. Guitarist Poison Ivy looks bored and aloof in a fabulous outfit; Singer Lux Interior stuffs the microphone into his mouth or down his pants and climbs onto the speaker columns; the other two people (the "employees") know their place and stay there. But the music is always great, and I marvel at those two talented, ageless people (we should all hope to look so good when we're in our 40's and 50's). I appreciate the fact that their outfits are so carefully chosen — that they have so much respect and consideration for their audience that they want to entertain them both visually and musically. Of course, this attitude is reciprocated, because most of people in the audience are in some kind of costume. Due to my inebriated state at the time, I don't remember all the details of the show. Which also means I had a really good

time, the most fun I've had on a Tuesday night in quite a few months. They played songs going back to the early days of the band, including "Garbage Man," "Thee Most Exalted Potentate Of Love," and material in between, like "Can Your Pussy Do The Dog" (yes, Ivy's can — she wore a see-through lace bodysuit with matching witches' hat and no panties), up to their most recent release, "Big Beat From Badsville" (1997). They also played a few from "Look Mom, No Head" (1991), which I consider their weakest record. The show ended in classic form, with Lux high atop the drum set, spilling wine all over himself, huffing and screaming into the microphone.

Hop, Skip and Jump by Devil Doll



If you haven't seen The Cramps play on Halloween, definitely do it, at least once. I hope they keep it up for a long, long time...

Two recent vinyl LP reissues of English psychobilly/rockabilly have been put out by Knock Out Records (Postfach 100716/46527

Dinslaken/GERMANY; www.knock-out.de). Both of these records are on cool colored vinyl, which is half silver and half gold! Demented Are Go's "Kicked Out Of Hell" (Knock Out 113) first came out in 1989 on I.D. Records. This record has a nice, big production, with lots of reverb and overdubs. That isn't always a good thing, but in this case it is. Singer Mark Phillips' metallic growl is at its spooky best, although it does get a little tiresome to listen to after a while. Regardless, I'm glad this record was reissued. Highlights: "Cripple In The Woods", one of my favorite songs, I dare anyone to try to sit still while listening to it; the guitar sound, electric fiddle and chorus on "Shadow Crypt"; the country-ish "Vietnam", where Phillips drops the growl in favor of a surprisingly smoother sound; and the rocking "Jet Tone Boogie", which is short, sweet and to the point. If you are also preoccupied with death and ghoully things, this record is for you.

The Meteors' "Wreckin' Crew" (Knock Out 115) first came out, also on I.D. Records, in 1983. This is a perfect example of what rockabilly sounded like in the early 1980's, when it was thriving in England and virtually ignored in America (except for those three guys called the Stray Cats and, on a smaller scale, bands that were embraced by the punk scene). This record has a nice amount of musical variety, and the lyrics have a cynical punk edge. It provides an interesting comparison with a lot of rockabilly bands today, who are obsessively

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Recorded live at the Breakroom in Seattle this features a full set of broken strings, inane banter & stupid cover songs, all captured pretty much by mistake (really) on Jason's 30th birthday. If they sound really drunk, they are (and you can blame the Kent 3). Oh yeah, and limited to 1,000 copies!

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HIT SQUAD

trying to duplicate the 1950's sound and image — so much so that it makes them seem stiff and contrived. It's OK to be a purist, but some bands make it seem more like a job and less like an artistic endeavor. On this record, the Meteors sacrifice the textbook 1950's sound for a raucous good time. Highlights: the galloping, atmospheric "Johnny Remember Me"; "I Don't Worry About It", a snarly blend of rockabilly and fuck-off punk rock; and a really fun cover of "Wild Thing". The last track on the record is "Mutant Rock", which perfectly describes this record.

Deke Dickerson has a new CD out, "Rhythm, Rhyme and Truth" (Hightone Records / 220 4th St. #101/Oakland, CA 94607; www.hightone.com). It is tighter and more focused than 1998's "Number One Hit Record" and 1999's "More Million Sellers" (both on Hightone). Those two CDs have some good material, and some big names (featured guests include R&B legend Claude Trenier of the Treniers, Larry Collins of the Collins Kids, Billy Zoom of X, boogie piano player/singer Hadda Brooks, and even famous Little Person Billy Barty), but this CD is better. No big names this time, but Dickerson makes up for it with better songs and lots of variety. My one complaint is that, on some songs, his musical influences become so apparent that I would almost rather listen to the influences themselves, like Johnny Cash ("Have Blues Will Travel"), or Ricky Nelson ("Heartbreaker Of The Town"). Highlights: A cover of "Beat Out My Love", which the Cramps also did over ten years ago; the R&B "Hot Rodder's Lament", which features the amazing vocal group the Calvanes; "(If I Go To Heaven) Give Me A Brunette", which carries on the tradition of rockabilly songs about hair color, like Johnny Powers' "Long Blonde Hair", and Sonny Burgess' "Red Headed Woman"; the

country suicide-murder dilemma "Where To Aim"; and "Headin' Down The Road", which just plain rocks, as does the instrumental "Speedin' On Keystone".

A rockabilly compilation series has recently been released by Legacy. I have one of them, "Ain't I'm A Dog: 25 More Rockabilly Rave-Ups" (Columbia/Epic/Legacy 62172). This is the Real Deal, rockabilly recorded between 1956-1961. It has colorful packaging, informative liner notes, and Coop art on the cover. This is an excellent starter compilation for people just discovering rockabilly. Give this a listen, then go track down as many recordings as you can by all of the artists on this CD. Rockabilly is a combination of many musical styles — country, rhythm and blues, hillbilly, country swing (which in turn has a strong connection to jazz), blues, etc. This CD, through the diversity of the artists on it, perfectly illustrates that musical blend. Highlights: "Hurricane" by guitar genius Joe Maphis and 13-year-old junior guitar genius Larry Collins of the Collins Kids; "Let's Have A Party", a song popularized by Wanda Jackson, is done by the brother and sister team of the Collins Kids here (early in their career, because of their young ages, the Collins Kids were often given material that was annoyingly cutesy — songs containing references to soda pop or with embarrassing titles like "The Beetlebug Bop", "The Cuckoo Rock", or "I'm In My Teens"; however, they still managed to rock the hell out of it. Immensely talented and enthusiastic, they were pros by ages 10 and 12, playing on television, performing, and making records; I highly recommend buying reissues of their 1950's and early 1960's recordings); "The Woman I Need (Honky Tonk Mind)" by Johnny Horton is a winner; "New Studio Blues", a Link Wray burner; the slang-filled "Sag, Drag and Fall" by Sid King and the 5 Strings has a great beat; and "Do Do Do", a rambling blues howled by the teenage Commonwealth Jones, aka Ronnie Dawson, Ronnie Dee, Snake Monroe, the Blonde Bomber. The punk rock of the 1950s.

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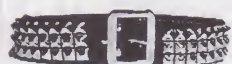
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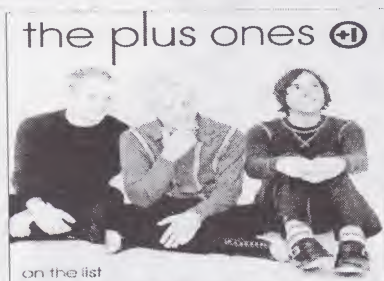
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ANTISEEN

By Thee Whiskey Rebel

ANTISEEN have existed for about 18 years or so now. Small wonder that they are a bit worn out from answering the same questions all the time. Can you imagine how many times they've been asked, by well intentioned and ignorant interviewers alike, "who are your influences". Or "can you please introduce yourselves and tell us what you play". To spare the "Boys from Brutalsville" a rehashing of all the tired questions they've been asked a hundred times by people outside of their circle, I...THEE WHISKEY REBEL...was asked, as a good friend of the band for 13 years or so, to sit down and yak with my good friend Jeff Clayton. As it happened, I retrieved the email requesting me to do this interview while a houseguest of the Claytons! Even veteran interviewers with the best of intentions who have done extensive homework don't have such handy access to meet with Jeff in his own home down in Dixie. Nor do they know what buttons to push to get Clayton to open up, or should I say what drinks to pour down his throat. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to talk to fellow founding member of ANTISEEN Joe Young (who has been running on the Libertarian ticket for North Carolina State office), or to their longtime drummer Sir Barry. I promise to do that next time. Meanwhile, join me in a boozy chit chat with Jeff concerning some hot topics that aren't covered in standard ANTISEEN interviews, mostly from my "insider's" vantage point.

WR: Let's start with a question that people are always asking ME, your buddy. When can folks expect to see ANTISEEN on the road?

JEFF: When clubs start paying! The damn thing is, once you get to the point where you got to be making house payments, car payments, gasoline payments, and feeding kids, going across the country just to play for 15 people at a club where nobody promoted the show — even for all the beer you can drink — kinda loses it's appeal after awhile. Since we've got all this new stuff coming out, Man's Ruin and TKO have both offered to fly us to different parts of the country for different promotional shows for the new releases. But I'm telling you, man, and you know this for a fact, we've not only paid OUR dues, we've paid enough for 15 other bands. It's been 17 years and we're not gonna waste our time and our money and change our livelihoods just to play every rinkydink town in the United States.

WR: Just to play devil's advocate, do you think that perhaps you've just had bad booking agents in the past?

JEFF: No, because the one tour where we went all over the country was booked pretty damn well. I mean, we were paid the damn guarantees, but the vehicle we were in just kept breaking down so much that by the time we got home we had 20 bucks each. We can't live like that.

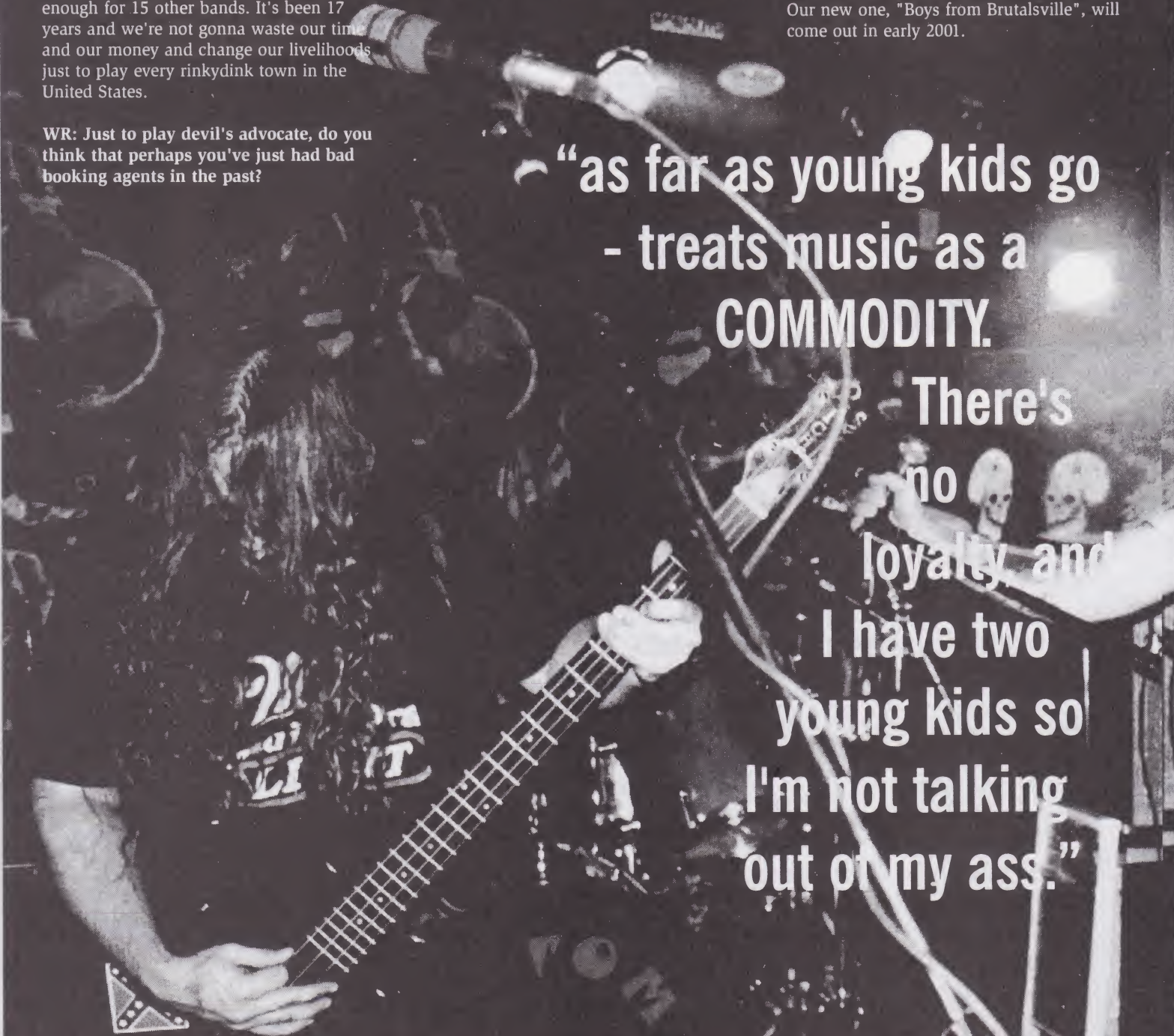
WR: This was back in...

JEFF: 1992. Consistently, of course, we've made trips to the Midwest and Texas and down South, which all proved to be profitable because we took 'em in small doses of about 5 days at a time. If we call to get booked somewhere, we know how much we need to have to make it worth our time, but usually nobody's willing to pay that. The thing about most club

owners, and this is no lie, 98% of the time if they give you a big guarantee, that means they have to put some effort into promoting it. Most club owners don't want to get off their asses and do that. That would mean WORK for them. Unless these people are gonna pay for what we need to survive, we can't afford to play. I mean, we're not trying to live some extravagant lifestyle or support any drug habits, we just wanna LIVE. I'd rather just go play in Europe, where they pay us what we feel we're worth.

WR: Speaking of Europe...are there any plans along those lines?

JEFF: Yeah, the Man's Ruin release is coming out over there, the reissue of "Southern Hostility" & "Eat More Possum". Our new one, "Boys from Brutalsville", will come out in early 2001.



“as far as young kids go
- treats music as a
COMMODITY.

There's
no
loyalty and
I have two
young kids so
I'm not talking
out of my ass.”

WR: Great title. Wasn't that originally a Fred Mills expression?

JEFF: Fred Mills and David Earl. Both were writers from around here. But the thing that made me choose it as an album title was that I heard YOU say, maybe it was during one of our late night phone conversations, that it would maybe make a good SONG title. So the tour of Europe should be organized for around March or April, just in time for me to catch the cold weather so that I can get really sick.

WR: So is there any way, if somebody feels like they live in a really strong ANTISEEN city, is there any way you'll change your mind about playing there? Or can we FINALLY lay this to rest forever?

JEFF: Well, you know what? This kid we know from Knoxville emailed me wanting to know how much we needed to go out there. We told him 500 bucks, which is not a lot of money. He emailed me back and said "500 bucks, that's a lot of money! G.G. would be spinning in his grave". Well, apparently the guy doesn't live on his

own..and apparently he didn't know G.G. too well! (A great deal of "insider" laughter disrupted the interview here).

WR: OK, let's talk about Southern rock. Besides yourselves, where can you find the last vestiges of Southern rock? Does it still exist here in the Carolinas?

JEFF: Honestly, you don't see it here in the Carolinas. You used to be able to see it in Charlotte, which used to be our home before we all moved out. Charlotte has tried so hard for so long to be a trendy city. They want to get recognition for being an "upscale" big city. They've actually done it, because every trend that comes and goes is fitting in there. It all started to crumble back during the jangly Athens-pop days. Do you remember that? The late '80s, that was when we were at our peak around here. Ever since then, Charlotte has made a go of every single trend that has emerged. The funk-rock fusion thing happened when the Chili Peppers first became really big. Of course I guess that 80's death-thrash-metal is still popular around here, but you're talking about a city where the DEAD BOYS played for 60 people but a band like

SLAUGHTER could of course fill any club or medium-sized arena at any time. This town has always been that way. People talk about the "Charlotte music scene". I think there was only one time that it was healthy, and that was about four years ago. Since then, anything that's popular on MTV — all the rap-metal crossover crap, the tribal tattoos, the body piercings, the baggy clothes, white people speaking "Ebonics" — THAT'S what becomes popular here.

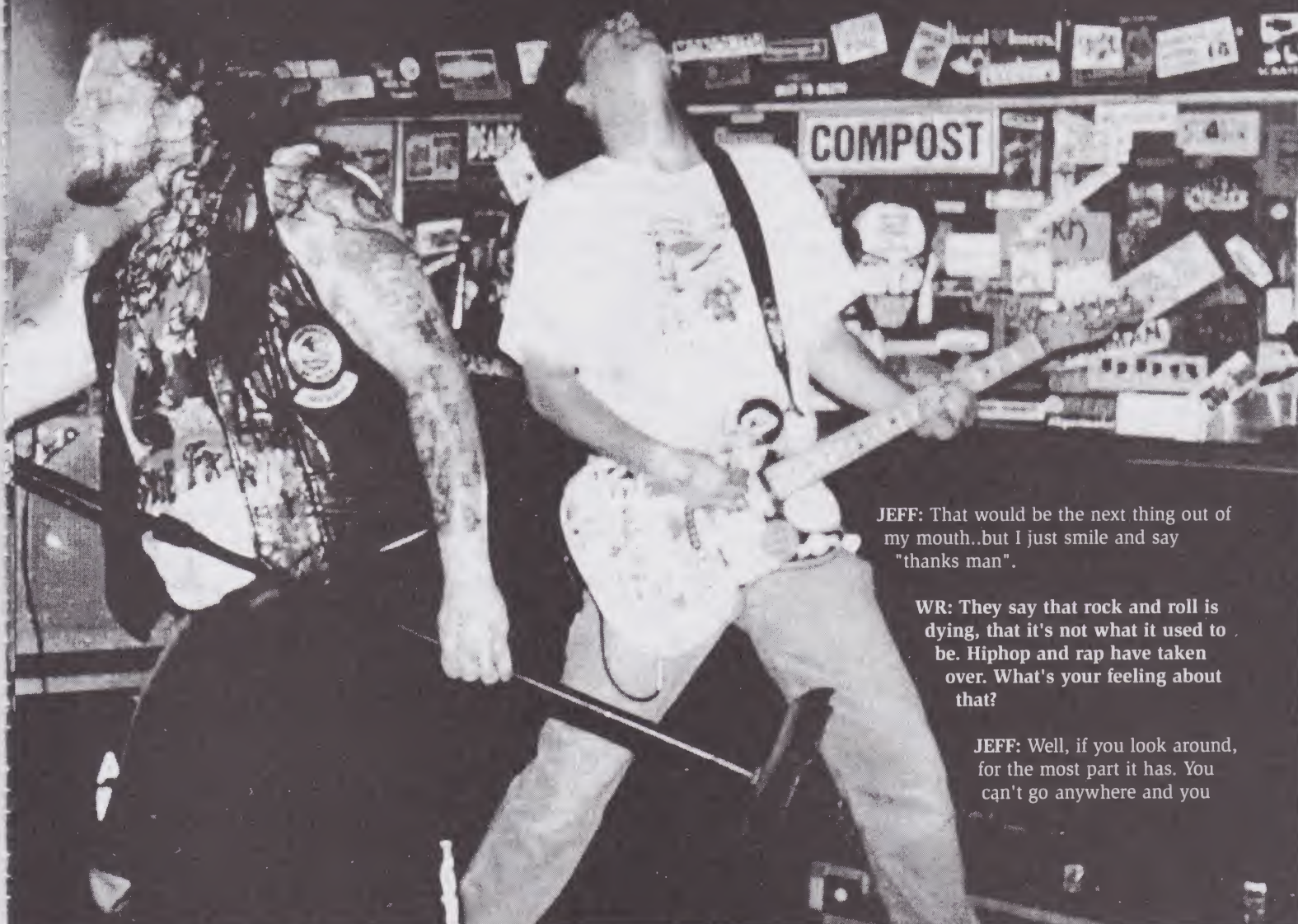
WR: How about a BLACK hip-hop/rap scene?

JEFF: If there is one, I'm completely unaware of it.

WR: Are the local bands aware of ANTISEEN?

JEFF: ALL these groups know about us. In more cases than I could ever remember, people come up to me if they see me in public and tell me that we were the first live band they ever saw.

WR: Do you ever say to 'em, "so what the hell happened?"



JEFF: That would be the next thing out of my mouth..but I just smile and say "thanks man".

WR: They say that rock and roll is dying, that it's not what it used to be. Hip-hop and rap have taken over. What's your feeling about that?

JEFF: Well, if you look around, for the most part it has. You can't go anywhere and you

can't do anything without seeing some sort of rap/hiphop influence. But to say that "rock is dead" is kind of a bold statement. There are rock and roll groups out there, but the thing is that rock fans are gonna have to look way harder than they've ever had to before to find those bands. MTV's not gonna be pushing 'em. Local radio sure as hell ain't gonna be pushing 'em. The thing about it is, groups like us, you guys, HELLSTOMPER, and all that have influenced a whole new crop of groups, it's just that you've gotta look real hard to even FIND them now. It's kinda like when punk first broke in the '70s...you'd scour the record stores looking for a single by ANYBODY. It didn't have to be the SEX PISTOLS. You might even buy ADAM & THE ANTS, ya know, real punk rock! (laughter). It's gonna be like that again.

Even though they've got these big monster chain stores where you can buy everything, it seems like the entire music-buying public — at least as far as young kids go — treats music as a COMMODITY. There's no loyalty, and I have two young kids so I'm not talking out of my ass. They want to like what their friends like. They want to fit in, and I think that's what most of the record buying public is like right now.

WR: OK, here's one for you then. What kind of fans are you guys drawing these days? Is there a difference between the fans you draw in Europe and the ones over here?

JEFF: I'd say our crowd in the States is in their late 20's and early 30's. I think what we do must look so dated to some of these younger kids that they just don't understand it. We've never been a real big underage crowd-drawing band. There was a time when it was to our benefit to play all ages shows, but over the last six or seven years that hasn't been a factor one way or the other. Most of the shows we play are 21 and over, to a hard-drinking crowd. They seem to be the people that appreciate us the most. I guess I could be wrong, though, 'cuz I don't really know how old some of these people are who write to us and order mail order stuff.

WR: How about down in Austin at South by Southwest. Was it all old timers who had seen you before? Or were there industry people crowding the front of the stage?

JEFF: There weren't any industry people crowding the front of the stage, you can believe that! Groups like the HOOKERS and the BULEMICS...even though we're not that

much older than them, our BANDS are sure as hell a lot older. I see them as the new crop. To say "rock is dead", I dunno. It's lost its foothold in America as far as the consumer Buyer, I reckon. But rock is never gonna completely go away, since there'll always be groups out there doing it.

WR: Getting back to the new album, how would you classify the songs?

JEFF: People have tried to call us Southern Rock before. People also call us hardcore, metal, and punk. I kinda think the term that best suits us is just plain rock and roll. There aren't gonna be any big surprises, just more of the same.

WR: There were some real departures on "Here to Ruin your Groove", like "Billy the Kid". Will there be some more surprising songs?

JEFF: Yeah, yeah. There's gonna be stuff like that, incorporating different instruments. I think we kinda went back to the way we used to write during the "Southern Hostility" period; I don't think we've put out another album as angry since "Southern Hostility". It's gonna be hard to match that, because we're all seven or eight years older. Our anger has gone off down other avenues.

WR: I suppose its debatable whether or not it's helped you more or hurt you more in the long run to be from the Carolinas. How would you regard that these days? Do Yankees up North still expect you to be moronic thugs?

JEFF: As you know, the whole "Southern-fried-whitetrash-redneck" thing has become very popular in underground rock, and even in mainstream rock to a certain degree. Most of these bands do nothing but parody what their idea of people from the South are all about.

WR: Take PANTERA, for instance..

JEFF: Those guys are from New Orleans. I guess I'm not sure whether you could call that part of the South. (laughter). People have such a fixed idea of the way the South is and the way people in the South are, and they're WRONG. They're ALWAYS WRONG, and they've always been wrong. TV is wrong. For example, all these bands with girls wearing horn rim glasses and phony beehives — IT'S JUST WRONG! They're as wrong as they can be. They don't have ONE DAMN IDEA about what it's like being from here.

WR: So are you suspicious of "Southern" rock bands, or bands with a Southern flavor from Detroit or Boston?

JEFF: Of course I am! I remember there was a time when if you wore a cowboy hat and a Confederate flag, you stood a good chance of getting your ass kicked because you were thought to be "a redneck". We got a lot of that when we went to Europe the first time. We got a lot of that when we went up North for the first time. Now it's fashionable to have a cowboy hat or a baseball cap with some sort of farm equipment logo. The thing I really love is the gas station attendant wear that doesn't have a BIT of dirt on it, and the overalls and all that shit. It's really weird because I've grown up in the South all my life, except for one stint where we spent five years in Baltimore.

WR: Weren't you trailer trash for a while?

JEFF: Mississippi trailer trash, to be exact. I lived in a trailer all the way up until '74. I actually hear groups trying to sing with Southern accents. I tell you what, you listen to HELLSTOMPER, and then talk to Alan King on the phone. There's NO DIFFERENCE! Call him at 3 in the morning, and he's gonna cuss you out with that Southern drawl. In a way I kinda think that the whole meaning of the rebel flag has just been dragged over the coals..

WR: Hey, what will happen if the NAACP decides to boycott ANTISEEN shows?

JEFF: Well, I don't think I have to worry about them showing up in the first place. I have pictures of us in Knoxville in 1986, and we've got rebel flags over our amplifiers. We caught hell for that, even back then. Now, everyone you see has got rebel flags draped over their amps or rebel stickers stuck on their guitars. I'm not saying that that's something that should just be confined to the South, either. It's the REBEL flag, it's a symbol of REBELLION. That's what the Confederate thing was mainly about anyway, not about slavery but about exiting from the North, becoming their own country, and doing their own thing to the ultimate degree. I'm not saying that you have to be from around here to start waving around the rebel flag; I'm just saying that people oughta be able to back it up when they're waving it around. Don't just do it because it's a trend, or because you saw some group in *Metal Edge* rock magazine with a Confederate flag T-shirt. All of a sudden all these clueless types feel like they have to

go out and cover everything they have with the "Confederate flag" because all of a sudden they're pretending to be "white trash"!

WR: I've read that some people believe that because the rebel flag bothers "SOME" black people, it should be done away with.

JEFF: Well, there's plenty of goddamn symbols that black people wear that offend ME, but I don't think should that they should be done away with just because I don't like 'em; I think it's their right to express themselves and do whatever they wanna do, as long as it doesn't interfere with me. I think all this rebel flag crybaby bullshit is just ridiculous. I mean, the NAACP urged black people to boycott our state. FINE! They can ALL avoid us and stay out if they want to! But if they do, they're also hurting their own people. What about all the black people who have businesses here? Are they supposed to just pack up and move because Jesse Jackson tells them to? We've got a way of life down here that we were doing just fine with until Jackson and his allies came down and started stirring shit up again. You haven't heard stuff like this since the '60s, when the KKK was violently opposing integration. I've got news for people: the Klan is no longer a force with any real power down here. There are "hate" crimes in Texas, there are "hate" crimes in California, and there are "hate" crimes in Germany. A bunch of

activists are trying to force us to take down a flag that supposedly offends black people. The fact is that plenty of black people see a Confederate flag every day and don't even bat an eye at it. Besides, how many black people are likely to be offended at punk rock shows?

WR: 17-18 years into the band, I think it's been so long since you had black and female band members that people aren't even aware of the fact that it's part of your band history. Of course, as we both know, ALL our C.O.S. bands — including you guys — have this reputation of being Southern bigots. That must piss you off...

JEFF: Yeah, I don't have any compassion at all for the Klan. They're just a bunch of

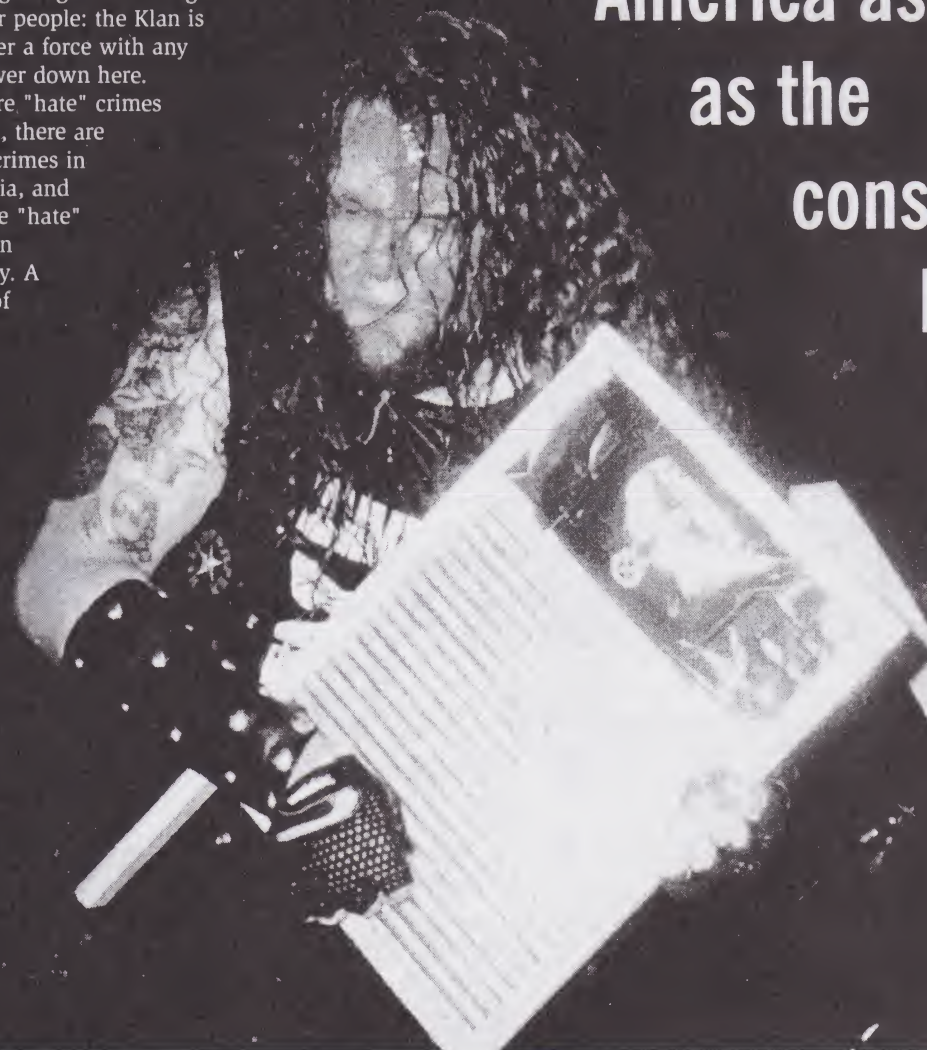
Bible thumpers, and I don't respect THAT at all. People just assume that cuz we're from down here that we must be in the Klan, drive pickup trucks, and hate "niggers". I'll be the first to tell you, I'm NOT a racist. I AM prejudiced, which simply means that I prejudge, but that's just based on life experiences with the people I've dealt with. These days I operate on a "guilty until proven innocent" basis. As far as I'm concerned, EVERYBODY's an asshole until they show me otherwise. In the course of my life I've let so many people just walk all over me, even when I've tried to be nice or help them, and after a certain point you can't do that anymore. You've got to be prejudiced in the literal sense, so I guess I am prejudiced in that way. One thing I really don't like is the

damn media shovin' black culture down my throat, day in and day out. I don't appreciate that at all. The media is actually creating more racial tension.

Man, I worked at the delivery company R.P.S. for three years. It is probably some of the hardest physical work you can do. I've heard people say that death is the great equalizer, but I'll tell you what — back-breaking, bone-crunching work is too. When you have these black dudes working side by side with ya, and you're both sweating, you're both about to pass out, you're both getting dehydrated and muscle aches, and you're

"To say "rock is dead", I dunno. It's lost its foothold in America as far as the consumer Buyer"

ITiS





both getting paid 10 dollars an hour, that's equality. So who's holding back who?

I certainly don't have the power to hold back an entire race of people, but if I did I would use it, I'll tell you that right now. If I had the power to hold down the ENTIRE HUMAN RACE, I would use it! (laughter)

WR: So, after 17-18 years, what still gets you excited about the band? What do you still have planned to look forward to in the future?

JEFF: In a sick way, I think the thing that's gotten us the most excited the last few years has been getting new members! You know, out with the pains in the ass and in with somebody we can tolerate for awhile. I think the bass player position in this band is the hardest job on earth to hold down. Matter of fact, we started making it so that the bass player position is a "belt". Tom O'Keefe was the longest-reigning bass

champion. The current reigning champion is Doug Canipe. These others guys, they just dropped the strap!

WR: When you start a band you think along the lines of "I can't wait to open a show for my heroes..."

JEFF: Some of our heroes, we've already played with..

WR: Is there anything else on the horizon? A dream bill? A dream tour? A record you'd like to do?

JEFF: As far as what makes me happy now is the new appreciation for all the stuff we've done in the past. I'd say the most accessible record we've ever done was "Here to Ruin your Groove", and because people enjoyed THAT so much they've

been going back and trying to get what they can from the past. And then we've got these labels wanting to put that old stuff out now. It's kinda fun to go back and do some things I wish we would've done before. Recently, we completely remixed "Eat More Possum". Jamie Hoover and Barry Hannibal (Sir Barry) did it.

WR: That's a big step, sending the drummer to the studio to a mixdown.

JEFF: Barry's got a damn good ear; his ear's better than mine. Matter of fact, I had to have YOU down for "Here to Ruin your Groove" to back up my bad ear. Barry's been with the band long enough, and I think he knows me and Joe Young well enough. He's not going to do anything that we'd raise an eyebrow at. I really trusted his judgment on most of this, and he really

"I'd say our crowd in the States is in their late 20's and early 30's. I think what we do must look so dated to some of these younger kids that they just don't understand it."

pulled through. He didn't drop the ball at all, so we're real happy. Also, it kinda lays a chapter to rest for me and Joe, who had to constantly explain and make apologies for "Eat More Possum".

WR: Maybe you should elaborate on that a bit..

JEFF: When it came out, it had been recorded in a really lo-fi type studio. Jeff Dahl came in to help do the mixdown. What we had as our final mixdown, he really brought out by doing some tricks on the E.Q. He deals with foreign pressing plants all the time, and he puts out something every month. So he wrote down instructions for them about what to do with the E.Q., so that the product that came out over there would sound exactly like what we were listening to in the studio. When they found out that they'd have to hire someone to sit at a control board to do that, to make it that way, they opted to just cut that cost completely. So I called up, since it was about three weeks before we we're supposed to be over there promoting this album and I had yet to receive a test pressing. I still haven't received a test pressing for "Eat More Possum". I don't think there ever was one. They just put it out with no E.Q. work at all, and it came out flat. It came out real tinny and not loud sounding. It wasn't very powerful at all, despite the fact that it contained a group of songs that probably

would have made it the strongest album that we'd done. It was just killed right from the start. We tried to get it re-released shortly thereafter on T.P.O.S. We also tried to do a remastering job, but it was kind of a dead subject at that point. And then — and I don't mean to rag on Malcolm — but he really disappointed me with the job he did on the domestic release. I was under the impression that we were gonna have silkscreened sleeves on it, white sleeves with silkscreened art on either side, which apparently couldn't be done. Instead, he ripped up old record jackets and glued 'em right over the record jacket art without consulting me at all. I didn't appreciate that. I still look at that as a low point, and in the end it just killed that record off. I think that now there's gonna be a whole new lease on life for that record, because people still write to me to get it and ask for it at shows. I think that with the remixing and repackaging, and especially the new distribution, it's gonna get a second chance. We're pretty happy about that. The other thing that still makes us happy is when we meet a group that comes up and openly admits that they were inspired by us. Especially if the group is good, that's a real pleasure. It makes you feel like you DIDN'T waste your time, and that you helped to produce some good bands out there.

WR: When you're faced with giving advice to these younger bands, now that

the demise of rock and roll seems to be imminent or at least on the horizon (laughter), would you tell them to go ahead and play rock and roll anyway?

JEFF: I'd tell 'em that if they want to make money, don't try messin' with this kind of rock and roll.

WR: Do you think it's tougher for new bands starting out now than it was for you guys 20 years ago?

JEFF: I think so. It's getting so that nowadays hardly anybody will take a chance on pressing a single for a band. It's gotta be somebody that they know is gonna sell, though I guess you can't blame 'em for that. I didn't get into music thinking I was gonna be filthy rich; if I had, I sure as hell wouldn't be playing the kind of music ANTISEEN plays. Ever since I was young, I knew I wanted to do this. I wanted to be in the kind of band that I wanted to go see. Fortunately, over the years I've met a bunch of people that felt the same way and were on the same wavelength. You guys, HELLSTOMPER, COCKNOOSE, HAMMERLOCK, groups from around here like the FRANKENSTEIN DRAGQUEENS, the DEAD KINGS, and the groups I'm meeting all the time, like the JACK SAINTS, the BULEMICS, the HOOKERS, the LOUDMOUTHS. All of 'em are damn good. I've found that all over the world, in places like Australia, Germany, and Italy, they're popping up. If any of them DO happen to get rich, and if for some reason this kind of music does find its way back up on top again, I'm gonna say more power to them. I won't have any bad feelings about it just cuz it didn't happen to us.

You and I have talked about this many times too, about the many people who go unappreciated, all those seriously underpaid bands that helped shape rock and roll in the first place. Even some of the more popular names were underpaid, like LITTLE RICHARD. Man, he got ripped off!

WR: How about the SEX PISTOLS, who've been ridiculed by so many rubes?

JEFF: Yeah, it's become really uncool to like the SEX PISTOLS. Man, I LOVE the SEX PISTOLS. I even loved them when they got back together for their reunion tour. I thought it was great; they came right out and said "there's one thing we've all got in common, your money!". I thought it was funny as hell. I couldn't WAIT to give them my money and buy that live album! +

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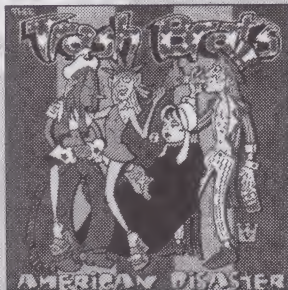
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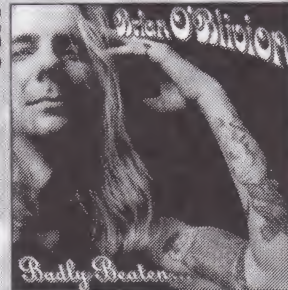
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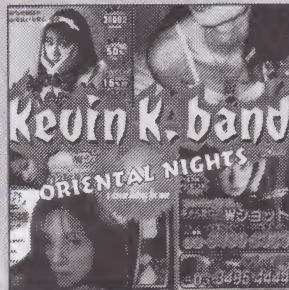
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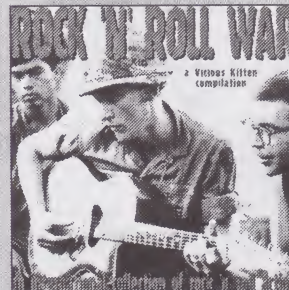
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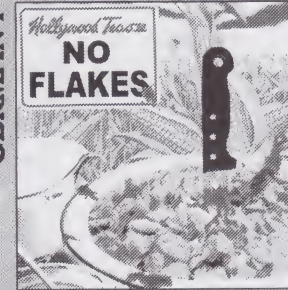
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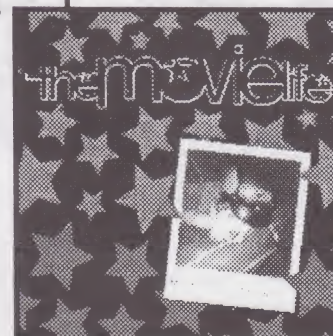
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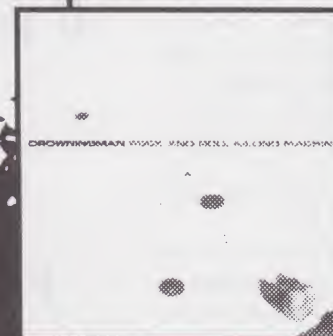
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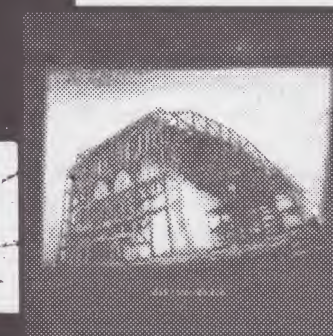
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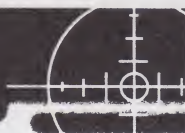


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REVELATION



I've just been reminded by a notation on the calendar next to me that today is Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. Whaddya know? Hmmm. That means that, according to the deadline info I've received from *Hit List* headquarters, it's likely that this issue will be available by mid-February. February is a very special month around our home. My wife and my all-time favorite wrestler, "the nature boy" Ric Flair, will celebrate their birthdays on the 25th. Just one day earlier, on the 24th of the month, we will commemorate - with shotglasses hoisted at half mast - the tenth anniversary of the death of country music legend Webb Pierce.

Starting with the very first day of February, however, we Irwin's will be spending as much leisure time as possible celebrating what has become one of our favorite times of year: BLACK HISTORY MONTH. Frankly, the three of us don't

spend too much time discussing, in suitably hushed tones, the contributions of Crispus Attucks, "Box" Brown, and Rosa Parks.

Instead, we celebrate in our OWN WAY. We have our OWN favorite

black heroes to pay tribute to. How? By enjoying their works all over again. We keep our turntable booming all month with the sounds of our favorite black musicians. We hold family film festivals every weekend night of the month, featuring what we feel are some of the finest black cinematic masterpieces. I also make it a point to reread a few of my favorite books by great black authors.

For instance, if you received an invitation to visit me in my basement during February between 3:00 and 6:00 AM or so, you'd probably be lucky enough to hear me play certain WYNONIE HARRIS songs over and over. What's that? Who's Wynonie Harris? It's your loss if you've never heard of him. Wynonie Harris was one of the best known R&B "shouters" of the postwar (that's WW II, stupid) period. He specialized in wild, sinful songs. A few of my favorites are "Rot Gut", "Quiet Whiskey", "Bloodshot Eyes", "Good Rockin' Tonight", "Keep on Churnin' (til the Butter Comes)", and "Down Boy Down". Wynonie's voice was abrasive and more wild than those of most rock and rollers who came along later in the 1950s. I've never, EVER seen any visitor to

my home who is less than excited after their first exposure to Wynonie Harris. His music was generally as uptempo as his subject matter was lewd. There are several reissues available of Mr. Harris's material, and I suggest you seek one out.

Another one of my black heroes, BIG JAY McNEELY, served as a particularly significant influence for guitar geniuses Jimi Hendrix and Dick Dale. He didn't even play guitar, though. It was his over-the-top showmanship honking on tenor saxophone that impressed Jimi and Dick. Big Jay achieved fame in the late 1940s-early 1950s for his incredibly wild stage act. He'd lay on his back, kick his feet, and blow...while screeching out repetitive, incredibly uptempo primitive riffs; sometimes he'd walk the bar honking away, but on other occasions he'd lead a clapping hysterical crowd OUT THE DOOR of the goddamned club. Big Jay's honking was incredibly hypnotic at times, and needless to say his act was considered "dangerous" by square parents in the early 1950s. For that matter, a helluva lot of jazz musicians looked down their noses at "the wild man of the tenor sax". Fuck 'em, I say. They were just jealous because they never "moved" audiences the way that Jay did. I consider the occasions I've talked to Big Jay (who is still a frequent performer) to be some of the best moments of my life. In his 60s he still had the enthusiasm of a teenager. What a HERO!

Another black hero that I've had the pleasure of witnessing in person is the great RUDY RAY MOORE. If you're not hip to Rudy Ray, you should be fucking ashamed of yourself. His films are essential viewing, "Dolemite" and "The Human Tornado" being my two favorites. Both were made in the 70s, but they're easily available for purchase or rent. Mr. Moore managed to combine triple XXX-rated comedy, martial arts, and a pinch of drama within each of his films. Furthermore, he was (and still is) a prolific recording artist and nightclub comedian. Rudy Ray Moore's comedy makes guys like Bill Cosby seem incredibly square. I can guarantee that ANYTHING you see with his name on it is top-notch and fucking hilarious. How many other entertainers main-

tain that kind of guarandamn-tee'd high standard? By the way, Norton Records recently released a redhot collection of Rudy Ray Moore's R&B recordings from the 1950's. Go get it, and tell 'em thee Whiskey Rebel sent ya.

There are a few other black action films that you should know about. The great Fred Williamson starred in "Black Caesar" and its sequel, "Hell Comes to Harlem", back in the 70s. Both are topnotch movies

written by Larry Cohen (who also wrote the horror classics "God Told Me To" "Q" and "It's Alive", as well as the TV series "Branded"). If you dig movies like "The Godfather" and "Carlito's Way", you'll LOVE these too. Super-sexy Pam Grier has starred in several great action movies you should check out. Start with "Foxy Brown" and "Friday Foster". And while you're at it, look for Isaac Hayes in "Truck Turner".

Most writers were ruined for me when I became totally obsessed with Bukowski years ago. Yunno, once you've tasted

Thinkin' & Drinkin' w/ The Whiskey Rebel



If you're not hip to Rudy Ray, you should be fucking ashamed of yourself. His films are essential viewing.

steak, bologna tastes like shit. Most of the so-called "greats", ranging from Shakespeare to Stephen King, put me to sleep. There are two amazing black writers (both unfortunately deceased) whose work you can read between Bukowski rereadings: ICEBERG SLIM and DONALD GOINES. In my "humble" opinion, both of these men's books make mincemeat out of guys like Kerouac and Mailer. Mr. Slim wrote about pimps, whores, and dastardly con men based on his own life experiences. ANY of his books are impossible to put down. Start with "Trick Baby", and you'll see what I mean. Donald Goines only wrote for about five years, but he left behind several books such as "Dope Fiend" and "Black Gangster" based on his personal experiences that are simply kick-ass reading.

I simply don't have enough space to acknowledge all of my black heroes in detail. While I'm at it, though, here are a few other musicians you should check out: Louis Jordan and Amos Milburn's '50s R&B material, Big Jay's rival sax honker Joe Houston (who also still performs regularly), the incredibly unique and inspiring spaceman Sun Ra, and mainstream guys like James Brown and Curtis Mayfield.

If you should happen to see my picture on CNN some night in connection with a spree killing-suicide, I hope you'll provide the authorities and the media with the following "explanation". I usually stay home and drink alone at night. But every now and then, I get to feeling a little bit restless and decide to go out. Whenever I do, I'm usually quickly reminded of why it's hardly ever worth it, and WHY I BECAME A TOTAL SOCIAL RECLUSE. Nearly all the pleasures in life I used to enjoy have vanished due to the fact that I must share them with other people. I avoid people as much as possible; I shop for groceries in the middle of the night. I have a

WHISKEYREBEL

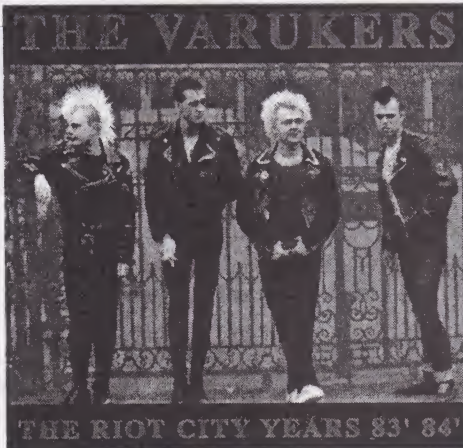
fucking phobia against answering the telephone or the front door. When I take my kid to a baseball game, we sit a hundred rows away from the nearest person. I used to get shitfaced drunk before going out in public...now, I simply stay home.

I fucking hate seeing the way people are dressed, especially people that are trying to be fashionable. I hate the expressions on their faces. I ESPECIALLY hate seeing people break out in a big smile. It used to be just hippies or babies or old farts that annoyed me. Now I can't even stand being around Joe Average. For years and years, I intentionally went to bars to see bands play music or simply to talk with friends. Now, I'd rather sit in a cold alley drinking alone. DON'T GET ME WRONG. I wish I could still enjoy being out in public. It's not that I WANT to be so annoyed by people. I wish I had good times with good friends every day of my life, but that's not the way things have worked out.

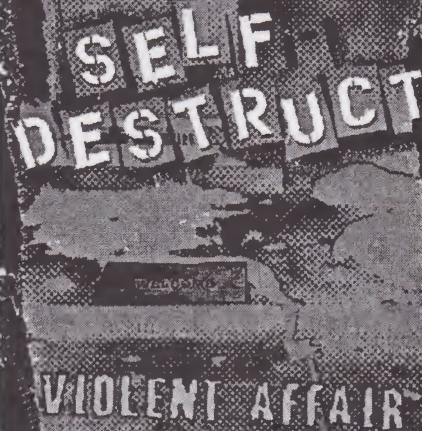
So for years, this has been my creed: I KNOW NOT WHAT COURSE OTHERS MAY TAKE, BUT AS FOR ME...GIVE ME ALCOHOL...and a quiet place to drink it...OR GIVE ME DEATH!

Seeing movies in theaters used to be a great way to escape the idiots walking and driving on the streets and be entertained at the same time. These days, fucking FORGET IT! It's considered cool and acceptable to talk out loud back to the screen. I've read in our local newspaper that it started out as a "ghetto" thing...a means of pointing out unfair depictions of blacks in movies. Nowadays, of course, white people have joined in. I don't really give a fuck WHY people do it. The fact is that the jackasses who talk during the movie burst my escapist "bubble". The idiots I came to the the-

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ater to escape and forget in the first place have become the theaters' best and most regular customers. Theaters WANT the dumbest fucking clucks in town as regular customers. Why? Because they obviously shell out more money on \$8 tubs of greasy popcorn that they saturate with greasy salted pseudo-butter to make you thirsty so you'll have no alternative but to buy the \$5 cola served in a large cup filled 3/4's full of ice. And as for the movies themselves? Any movie critic or observer will tell you that most movies are targeted to the "youth" mentality these days. It's all teen-hunk dreck. They don't attempt to make "great" films these days. Instead, they crank out movies that are the cinematic equivalent to N'Sync, Britney Spears, the Backend Boyz, and the worlds greatest rapper Enema-m. If you're into top 40 music, you probably LOVE what's being shown in theaters these days. A couple of times a year the industry will accidentally release a "Private Parts" or "South Park Movie" or "Beyond the Mat". I used to go to drive-in movies every damn weekend as a teen.

I miss going out like that, but I'm afraid that as for me, GIVE ME ALCOHOL...and my quiet basement throne...OR GIVE ME DEATH!

I gave up on arena concerts years ago. To be honest I hated them back in the 70s, but I was too shy to say such a blasphemous thing out loud. If you choose to go, one thing's for sure. The promoters and bands will do their best to ensure that before you get to see the headliner, you're gonna SUFFER and WAIT and wait and wait and wait. You're gonna wait in line to buy tickets. You're gonna wait in line for the privilege of shelling out \$9 to park. Once inside the arena, you're gonna wait a LONG time in a hot, stuffy, smelly cramped space before the opening band begins. (If you're LUCKY, there'll only be ONE of them.) You're gonna REALLY wait and wait and wait between sets. Meanwhile, you're jammed in a huge crowd of stinky, sweaty, brainless lowlife scum. You say that's fun? That's MY VERSION OF HELL! Yes, hell to me is waiting and waiting and waiting while some asshole rockstar or promoter keeps 10,000 people waiting in the hopes that they'll buy more watered-down soda or crappy \$35 T-shirts.

At any concert, before the headliner ever sets foot on stage, you can see a parade of people being dragged out from heat exhaustion and people barfing, while you wait and wait and wait. People will be ranting like lunatics, and stoned people, limbs stretched out akimbo, will be hippie dancing and shaking their fucking hair in your face...while you wait and wait and wait some more. That \$6 dixie cup of beer at the concession stand will start looking better and better the longer you wait. As for the bathroom, it's gonna be a DAMN long wait if you're desperate enough to have to piss. And son, I sure as hell hope you don't have to take a fucking dump! Imagine what that stool's gonna look like after 300 drunk, stoned retards have been discharging bodily fluids of all types into and around it. Butt wipe? I hope you brought enough to deal with a fucking inevitable mound of shit stretching 4 inches higher than the brim of the clogged toilet!

Nope. I can't deal with concerts anymore unless I have a backstage pass so that I can be laughing with the band at all the marks (YOU, that is) and swilling ice cold Heinekens with pampered rock stars that don't give all your suffering a passing thought. You won't see me at the next KISS farewell tour...OR the two or three after that for that matter. I've learned my lesson, and I've found a course of action.

GIVE ME ALCOHOL...and my comfortable Whiskey Rebel throne...or GIVE ME DEATH!!

Yunno, I LOVE restaurants. But I HATE PEOPLE, and you can't have one without the other. Have people in restaurants gotten more annoying over the last 20 years, or is it just me and my "sickness"? I never bother to even try to eat at a restaurant during peak hours. I always insist on going when the restaurant is dead. But did you ever notice how, even if there's only one table full of braying jackass humans in the place, the hostess will automatically try to seat you next to them? When they ask "smoking or non-smoking?," I have my anti-smoking wife trained to request a table "wherever it's not crowded". I have terrible luck at restaurants. Have you ever had somebody walk up and stick their finger almost in your food and ask "oh, what's that?" or "oh, that looks

good!"? I have. I fucking want to gag whenever the waiter kneels by my booth to introduce himself: "Hi, my name is Chad, I'll be your server." FUCK YOU, CHAD! Don't try to work me for a tip in such an obvious, nauseating way!

Another one of my pet peeves is the dialogue you hear from other tables, such as a parent constantly chiding their

brat "I'm gonna BEAT YOUR BUTT when I get you home." OR: "and then I told the doctor, you've gotta fix the corn on my toe. It really itches. OOOHHH! When I scratch it, it starts shooting pus or bleeding. Blah, blah, blah, blah..." HOW APPETIZING! Even worse than the parents who are always yelling at their kids in restaurants are the thoughtless pricks that let their little cherubs run around the room. I always hope one will trip and have their eye poked out on a salad fork.

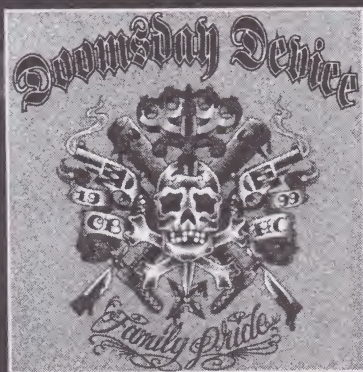
I also hate waitresses with "attitudes" who seem to think they can be as bitchy as they want and still expect a goddamned tip. And how about those lazy cunts who are so busy filling salt and pepper shakers that you can't get their attention?? The topper to an already bad visit to a restaurant can be a dining partner who insists on tipping 20% even when the waitress or waiter has been rude and arrogant. Well, I've learned how to deal with bad restaurant experiences. For any reason, for any season, the ANCIENT ANSWER! I'll eat canned ravioli...AGAIN...and save the money I would've spent at a restaurant on a 30-pack of COORS and a fifth of REBEL YELL whiskey.

I KNOW NOT WHAT COURSE OTHERS MAY TAKE. AS FOR ME, GIVE ME ALCOHOL...and a soft chair to pass out in...or GIVE ME DEATH! †

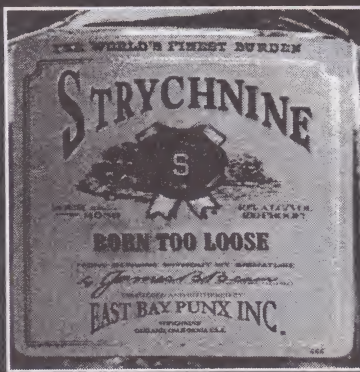
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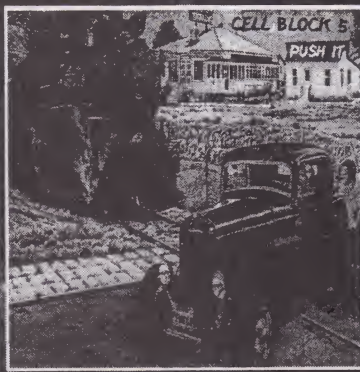
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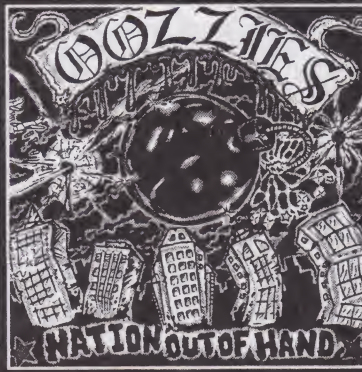
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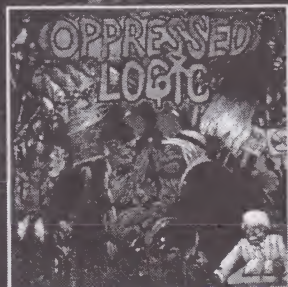
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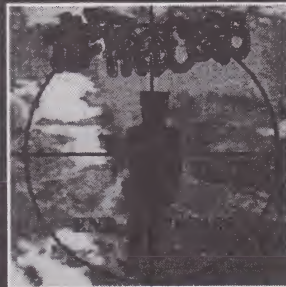
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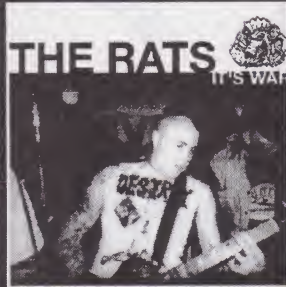
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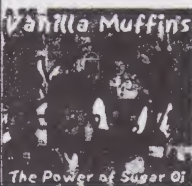
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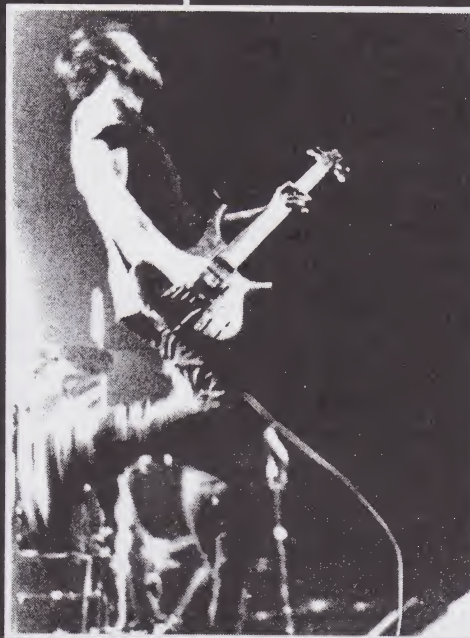
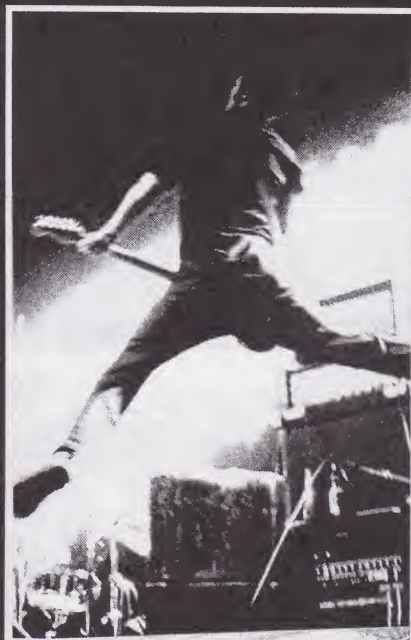
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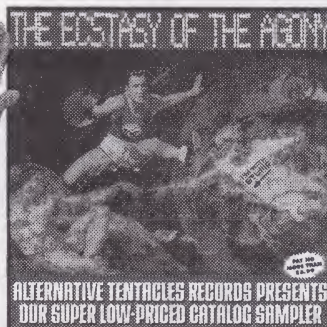
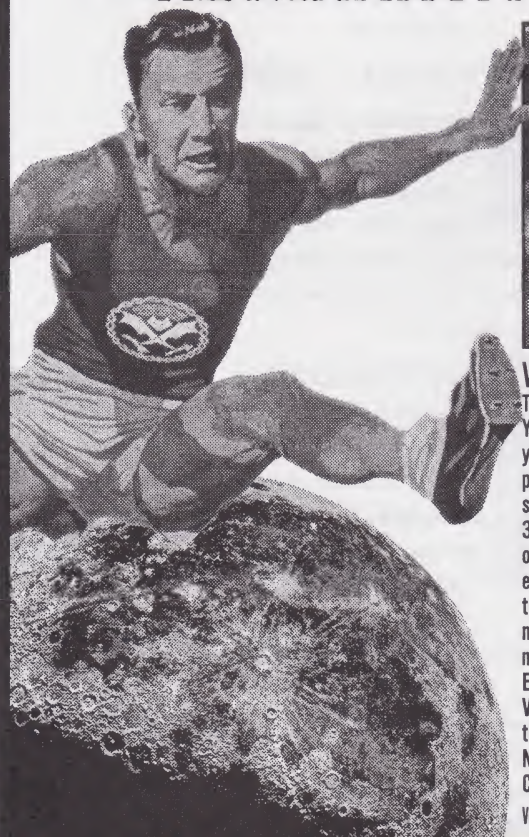
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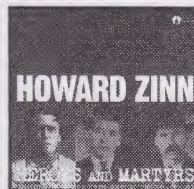


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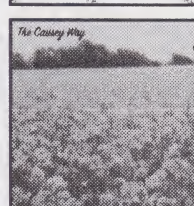


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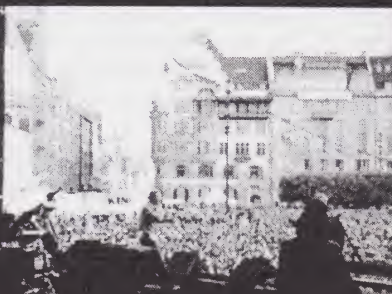
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In the last issue of *Hit List* (vol. 2, no. 4), we published the first installment of our projected two-part series dealing with the contemporary "Cult Wars". One of the main purposes of that initial installment was to lay the groundwork for a more detailed discussion and analysis of the underlying agendas of certain key figures and organizations that are actively taking part in the current debates about so-called "New Religious Movements" (NRMs). It should be emphasized, however, that the motives of most of the participants in these debates are reasonably transparent. For example, activists affiliated with the evangelical "counter-cult movement" (CCM) are typically seeking to defend Judeo-Christian religious orthodoxy and, in the process, preserve moral "purity" (as they define it); those associated with the secularized "anti-cult movement" (ACM) are seeking to warn others of the dangers that thought-reform cults pose to individual cult members and society at large, whether these cults be religious, therapeutic, political, or hybrid groups; those affiliated with NRMs, in order to forestall further social stigmatization and outright political repression, are endeavoring to portray themselves as innocent truth-seekers who are being unjustifiably subjected to religious, social, or political persecution; and those academic social scientists who defend NRMs against all criticism, however justified, typically claim to be doing so in order to defend religious freedom or preserve fundamental constitutional rights. Although there are surely people with hidden personal motives or disguised ideological agendas operating within all four of the above groups, most of those involved in the often heated debates about NRMs are essentially what they appear to be.

However, this does not appear to be true of Massimo Introvigne, one of the most sophisti-

cated and intelligent of today's "cult apologists".(1) Nor, by extension, is it true of the important international organization he heads, the Turin-based Centro Studi sulle Nuove Religioni (CESNUR: Center for the Study of New Religions).(2) On the surface, Introvigne is merely one of the most prolific, wide-ranging, and interesting of the intellectuals who have in recent years made a career out of defending NRMs, including those with authoritarian agendas, transgressive rituals, paranoid millenarian fantasies, harsh social control mechanisms, and violent proclivities. If one were to read only his scholarly publications devoted to NRMs, one could easily get the impression that Introvigne is an extreme civil libertarian, a remarkably tolerant liberal, and perhaps even a countercultural bohemian or decadent libertine. (See, for example, his "Satanism Scares and Vampirism", which he presented to the 1997 World Dracula Congress in Los Angeles!) As it turns out, however, nothing could be further from the truth.

Who, then, is Massimo Introvigne, and what accounts for his ongoing campaign against cult critics of every stripe? Introvigne was born in Rome on 14 June 1955, but his family is Piedmontese and he has lived in Turin for most of his life. As a teenager he was an activist in the rightist Fronte Monarchico Giovanile (FMG: Monarchist Youth Front), which was itself affiliated with the Unione Monarchica Italiana (UMI: Italian Monarchist Union). He then joined the ultratraditionalist Alleanza Cattolica (AC: Catholic Alliance) group and soon became one of its cell leaders (*capocroci*). Early on he wrote pseudonymous articles for the rightist weekly *Il Borghese*, the mouthpiece of the conservative "double-breasted suit" faction within the neo-fascist electoral party, the Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI: Italian Social Movement).(3) During that period he was also

an admirer of the intransigent ultratraditionalist French bishop Marcel Lefebvre, who was so overtly resistant to the process of liberalization and modernization initiated by Pope John XXIII during the Vatican II Council that he was eventually excommunicated from the Catholic Church.(4) When this final break between Lefebvre and the Church hierarchy occurred, both AC and Introvigne (who had spent time at Lefebvre's seminary at Ecône) prudently decided to adopt an "entrism" strategy in order to influence the Church "from within" rather than openly breaking with it and joining Lefebvre's *Fraternité Sacerdotale de Saint-Pio X* and other so-called *sede vacante* ("vacant-seat") groups, i.e., those which proclaimed that the reigning popes were usurpers rather than the true "vicars of Christ". From then until now, Introvigne has been an activist in Alleanza Cattolica, and his energetic organizing and publishing activities eventually led to his appointment as a national leader of the organization. More recently, following the dissolution of the Democrazia Cristiana (DC) party after its final disgrace in the wake of the "Clean Hands" corruption scandal and the political transition to the so-called Second Republic, Introvigne joined a small right-wing splinter party called the Centro Cristiano Democratico (CCD: Democratic Christian Center). The CCD in turn became a member of the rightist "Pole of Liberty" coalition, along with Alleanza Nazionale (AN: National Alliance), formerly the MSI, and Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia ("Go Italy!").(5) In short, Introvigne has been a hard-line political and religious conservative throughout his entire life.

How, then, did he end up defending the religious freedom of satanists and vampire aficionados at the World Dracula Society in 1997? To shed light on this complex question, we are reprinting several articles below that deal in

The cult



Dr. Plínio Corrêa Oliveira in action.

WARS

part two

some depth with aspects of Introvigne's background and activities.

The centerpiece is a long article by Dr. Miguel Martinez, a specialist on religious matters who has created an entire website devoted to exposing the real agenda of Introvigne and CESNUR (www.kelebekler.com/cesnur). The portions of Martinez' hitherto unpublished manuscript that we are printing below provide an incredibly rich mine of information concerning Introvigne's background, information which should give pause to his more naïve academic collaborators. It isn't really possible to do justice to Martinez' thoroughly-documented study in a brief summary, but his central thesis is that the ideology of Alleanza Cattolica, and consequently that of Introvigne himself, is based upon the counterrevolutionary doctrines of a Brazilian bishop and ultratraditionalist theorist named Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, who founded an organization known as the Sociedade Brasileira per la Defesa da Tradição, Família e Propriedade (TFP: Brazilian Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property). TFP hoped to reestablish a quasi-

deviated from traditionalist Catholic orthodoxy, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses. But during the mid-1980s, after TFP itself started being accused, mainly by other Catholic traditionalists, of being a cult — quite justifiably, in my view — Plinio suddenly shifted gears and transformed TFP from a "cult bashing" organization into a "cult apologist" organization. This shift was soon reflected in the pages of AC's publication, *Cristianità*, and not long afterwards Introvigne founded CESNUR and embarked upon his own career as a specialist on NRMs. In short, Martinez traces CESNUR's "pro-cult" agenda to that of TFP.

This eye-opening interpretation is further reinforced in a short article by Alessia Guidi, who compares and contrasts the recent remarks made by Introvigne on Swiss television with claims he had made earlier in a 1993 booklet published by AC. According to Guidi, Introvigne clearly revealed AC's and CESNUR's underlying TFP-inspired agenda in that booklet, even though he has made efforts to conceal that same agenda in non-traditionalist forums. Henceforth it may be far more difficult

cle nonetheless provides some interesting insights into Introvigne's connections and activities in the United States, as well as a certain amount of valuable food for thought.

The fourth entry below consists of excerpts from an important article that appeared in the Parisian newsweekly *L'Événement du Jeudi*, written by left-wing journalist Serge Faubert. It concerns the secretive Group de Thèbes (Thebes Group), a veritable secret society composed of the leaders of certain occult groups and scholarly "cult apologists" which held its annual gatherings in rented meeting halls at the headquarters of the Grand Orient de France, one of the two principle masonic obediences in that country. The ostensible goal of this Thebes Group, which planned to change its name on a regular basis and also created a front group known as the Cercle d'Alexandrie (Alexandria Circle) whose purpose was to vet potential recruits for the more secretive parent group, was to serve as a private forum where members of esoteric fringe groups could exchange information with NRM researchers, away from the prying eyes of the uncompre-

medieval Catholic social order with itself at its head, clearly a utopian fantasy, but in practice this caused it to actively resist all social, economic, cultural, and political changes which it viewed as having been inspired by a succession of "evil" anti-Christian revolutions: the schismatic Protestant Reformation, the secular and rationalist French Revolution, the subversive Communist Revolution, and the degenerate Countercultural Revolution. In order to accomplish its objectives, TFP not only created an authoritarian cult-like organizational structure capable of instilling Plinio's doctrines in members via manipulation and coercion, but also collaborated *tangibly* with a number of brutal military regimes in South America by justifying the launching of "counterrevolutionary" operations.⁽⁶⁾ Among other things, TFP helped to co-opt and suppress radical peasant movements in Brazil, and it soon managed to establish branches throughout Latin America, as well as in the United States and Europe. According to Martinez, both AC and Introvigne actively promoted TFP's reactionary agenda in their various publications. At first this led them to attack secular humanism virulently in all of its forms, especially those which they referred to as the "abortionist cult" and the "communist cult" — note the terminology employed! — as well as all types of religious groups that

for Introvigne to sustain his somewhat disingenuous self-portrayal as nothing more than a truth-seeking social scientist.

We then reprint three additional selections that describe other facets of Introvigne's lesser-known activities. One is an article by Lucio Tancredi that appeared in the "left fascist" journal *Orion*, whose publishers now constitute the Italian branch of the revamped European Liberation Front, an international association of radically anti-American and anti-imperialist "national revolutionary" groups, including, among others, the post-Heick American Front in the US, the National Bolshevik Party in Russia, Alternativa Europea (AE: European Alternative) in Spain, and, perhaps most ironically (given the controversial issues raised immediately below), Christian Bouchet's Nouvelle Résistance (NR: New Resistance) group in France. According to Tancredi, what Introvigne is really up to, given his unceasing efforts to defend US-based "pseudo-spiritual multinationals", is promoting the hypocritical American neo-conservative campaign against "religious persecution" abroad and, in the process, covertly attempting to influence European far right groups in the interests of international capitalism. On the basis of the available evidence such an interpretation seems off target, but the *Orion* arti-

hending public. The scholars would then report on aspects of these groups, whilst maintaining their sensitive inner secrets, at select academic and CESNUR-sponsored conferences. This raises broader questions about exactly where the boundary between practicing occultists and "outside" participant observers can and should be drawn, as well as about possible conflicts of interest, but for our purposes the importance of the Thebes Group lies in the fact that Massimo Introvigne was one of its founding members, and that other leading CESNUR figures, such as Swiss NRM specialist Jean-François Mayer, were also affiliated with the group. Even more interesting, several of the scholars and occultists associated with the group had previously had — and in certain cases continued to have — radical right political associations. For example, one of the key Thebans was none other than Christian Bouchet, who had previously been affiliated with Jean-Gilles Malliarakis' Mouvement Nationaliste Révolutionnaire (MNR: Nationalist Revolutionary Movement), and had later become the leader of the most left-leaning (*terceriste*) current within that organization (which had by then been renamed Troisième Voie [TV: Third Way]). He then broke with Malliarakis, who he accused of being a "reactionary", and formed his own NR organization.

Bouchet was also heavily involved in occultist circles, having written his Ph.D. thesis on Aleister Crowley's Thelemite Movement and developed close links to — if not formal affiliations with — a number of esoteric, satanist, and countercultural groups.(7) Also among the numerous Thebans with a radical right background was CESNUR's own Mayer, who as a youth had been involved in a number of neo-fascist ventures. Among other things, in the mid-70s he was the Lyon representative of *Defense de l'Occident*, fascist theorist Maurice Bardèche's influential journal; until 1979 he was an activist in the regionalist group Horizons Européennes, which was backed by the "federalist" faction of the *nouvelle droite*; in 1979 he also edited the Swiss Odinist journal *Skuld*; and he was a contributor to the Groupe de Recherches et d'Études sur la Civilisation Européenne (GRECE: Research and Study Group on European Civilization) literary journal, *Panorama des Idées Actuelles*, between 1979 and 1986. Despite this peculiar background — or perhaps precisely because of it — he later managed to become a leading

behavior for those who claim to be good Catholics.

I myself am not certain what to make of all this. After all, these matters are very complex, not to mention murky. There seems to be no doubt, however, that Massimo Introvigne is a Catholic activist who is vigorously defending NRMs for reasons other than simple scholarly curiosity, a deep-rooted concern for civil liberties, or a principled opposition to governmental abuses of power per se. Although such diverse motives may well be complimentary and need not be mutually exclusive, Martinez makes a very convincing case below that Introvigne's motives are primarily religious in nature, and that by defending every unconventional religious group he is also helping to defend the interests of TFP, whose eccentric leader was the doctrinal font of many of his own peculiar "counterrevolutionary" theories. Indeed, as Guidi further shows below, Introvigne incautiously revealed and partially clarified his underlying religious agenda in a booklet published by AC that had previously been overlooked. Even so, I believe that the

in the long-term struggle against secularism. Therefore, by strongly opposing all attempts by governments, however legitimate, to crack down on the problematic socio-psychological, financial, and political activities of certain cults, Introvigne and CESNUR may be simultaneously serving the interests of a multiplicity of groups, ranging from cults themselves to authoritarian Catholic sects to elements within the Church hierarchy to academic NRM apologists to genuine civil liberties organizations, all of which have their own peculiar motives for defending NRMs. Motives which, it should be emphasized, are often fundamentally incompatible, if not entirely antithetical. What we seem to have here is an example of the standard rationale for making common cause with strange bedfellows: the sometimes foolish conviction that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend."

Nor should one overlook the possibility that Introvigne obtains certain deep-seated personal and psychological benefits from engaging in these ongoing pro-NRM activities. Consider, if you will, a repressed Catholic militant who has

consultant on religious matters for the Swiss Defense Ministry.(8) Other right-wing Thebans are discussed below in Faubert's article.

The final entry consists of portions of articles that appeared in the journal *Sodalitium*, the organ of an Italian *sedevacanza* organization known as the Istituto Mater Boni Consilii. These articles reflect criticisms of Introvigne and CESNUR that are now emanating from certain sections of the ultratraditionalist Catholic right. Hence it is not surprising that "Father Torquemada", the pseudonymous (and witty) author of these hostile articles in *Sodalitium*, would be especially scandalized by Introvigne's alleged associations with satanists and Freemasons — both of whom have long numbered among the traditional enemies of the Catholic Church — specifically through his frequent appearances at underground satanist "black masses", his prior membership in the scientific committee of the quasi-Masonic journal *Ars Regia*, and his curious decision to hold Thebes Group meetings at the masonic Grand Orient de France's headquarters, potentially "sinister" activities which might well serve to explain his extraordinarily sympathetic, if not entirely heretical, current attitudes toward unorthodox religious groups. In the eyes of *Sodalitium*, rubbing shoulders with satanists and Freemasons is anything but appropriate

"cult apology" campaigns which are being continually waged by Introvigne and CESNUR have been motivated by far more than a simple desire to defend the relatively narrow interests of TFP, and in this limited context I must respectfully take issue with Martinez.

My own view, which is admittedly somewhat speculative and at present based on a rather limited number of sources, is that Introvigne also represents, and is in part pursuing, the interests of certain powerful factions inside the Vatican.(9) Within the Church hierarchy, there are (at least) two contrasting views about how best to respond to the challenge posed by unorthodox religious groups, Catholic and otherwise. On the one hand, the more narrow-minded traditionalists continue to view such groups as dangerously heretical enemies who should be vigorously fought and harshly suppressed. The members of this particular faction can be seen, metaphorically-speaking, as heirs of the Inquisitors. On the other hand, there is a rather more sophisticated and far-seeing faction that is competing with the first which views "secular humanism" in all of its manifestations as the main threat. On the basis of that premise, this second group views all other religious groups, including those that are clearly heretical and perhaps even anti-Catholic, as potential de facto allies

— on the surface, at least — spent most of his life leading a relatively austere bourgeois lifestyle, working as a respectable patent lawyer, and promoting an inflexible counterrevolutionary ideology. Can you imagine how thrilling, if not liberating, it must now be for him to participate on a regular basis in shockingly "taboo" activities like attending satanist black masses and gatherings of self-styled vampires, all the while claiming to be a concerned scholar who is merely engaged in "participant observation" of the groups he is studying? In other words, in addition to the prestige that is nowadays accruing to him as a result of his impressive publishing and conference organizing activities, he can now frequently indulge in pleasurable, even exhilarating activities that his own religious milieu previously viewed as "perverse" and "degenerate", and then later make a convincing case, both to himself and others, that he is doing so solely in order to promote agendas that are both "religiously correct" and politically righteous. Thus, Although amateur psychologizing of this sort should always be taken with a grain of salt, it would probably be unwise to completely ignore Introvigne's possible personal motives.

In any case, our purpose in publishing the articles below is simply to shed some light on the complex background and motives of

Massimo Introvigne and, by extension, some of his closest colleagues in CESNUR. I do not claim that we have fully clarified the actual nature of their agenda, but I believe that we have demonstrated beyond a shadow of a doubt that they do in fact have various unspecified agendas. Moreover, by and large these agendas have hitherto been artfully hidden from most of CESNUR's "profane" collaborators, above all the ever-growing number of gullible academic specialists on "New Religious Movements" or, to use their most recent politically correct euphemisms, "minoritarian religions" and "spiritual minorities".

This brings us back to our point of origin, namely, the astonishingly naive attitude displayed by so many academic "experts" — whether they are housed in the History, Religious Studies, Anthropology, Cultural Studies, Political Science, or Sociology departments — about the real nature of various NRMs and certain other fringe groups of a therapeutic or political nature. This naivete all too often persists *even when virtually all of the available evidence* indicates that the miniature totalitarian groups in question systematically apply thought reform techniques and impose authoritarian social control methods, in some instances even outright physical abuse, on their own adherents, as well as sometimes committing acts of violence against outside critics. Nor is this all. Not only are many of these "experts" unable (or perhaps unwilling) to recognize the totalitarian nature of a number of influential NRMs, in some cases even those that they themselves have studied (!), but they also appear to be wholly unaware of the covert religious and political agendas being pursued by some of their own "cult apologist" allies, including researchers such as Introvigne and other members of groups such as CESNUR.⁽¹⁰⁾ It goes without saying that these same self-styled "experts" have probably never even heard of more obscure esoteric organizations that may have some bearing on their subjects, such as the Group de Thèbes, the Ordre Rénové du Temple, Nueva Acrópolis, the Luciferian Ordre Vert, the Legionarios de Cristo, etc. One is tempted to conclude that several of these NRM "experts", the majority of whom are rather parochial Americans who seem not to know any foreign languages, are unwittingly serving as "useful idiots", both for certain noxious cults and for the far more sophisticated cult defenders affiliated with CESNUR.

However that may be, these harsh criticisms of certain circles of "cult apologists" are not meant to dismiss or trivialize legitimate concerns about societal threats to religious freedom or governmental abuses of the civil rights of members of non-mainstream groups, concerns which I myself share. Whether the underlying motives of cult defenders are noble

or base, honest or sinister, this does not alter the fact that persecutorial campaigns against unconventional religions are not uncommon events, even in our supposedly enlightened era. Two high-profile examples should suffice to illustrate recent societal overreactions to the dangers thought to be posed by certain religious cults. First, delusional conspiracy theories postulating the existence of a vast network of underground satanic cults that are allegedly engaged, among other things, in systematically kidnapping and ritually murdering children, led to the development of a "satanic panic" in the 1980s and 1990s, both in the United States and Britain. Despite the fact that such a satanist underground has never existed, a number of innocent individuals were falsely accused and later imprisoned for child abuse and other horrendous crimes after a witchhunting mentality spread like wildfire in certain communities (e.g., Edenton, North Carolina).⁽¹¹⁾ Second, the bungled 1993 assaults on the Branch Davidian compound by both the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) and, later, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) resulted in the tragic immolation of many members of that sectarian group. Although I believe that David Koresh was an unstable individual with a volatile apocalyptic worldview, and am by no means convinced that these government agencies could have avoided the use of force no matter how they handled the case, there is no doubt that their clumsy use of violence dramatically worsened the situation and ultimately precipitated a catastrophe.⁽¹²⁾

For that very reason, the "Waco affair" was an important and traumatic milestone in the development of the [NRM] field and in the interactions between scholars and authorities", and in its wake a consensus has emerged among social scientists and religious experts that the authorities henceforth need to make greater efforts to "understand" and empathize with the complex worldviews of minoritarian religious groups — which implies, not coincidentally, that they should first consult with NRM "experts"! — and that they should *avoid taking any actions which might be interpreted as hostile by such groups*.⁽¹³⁾ Moreover, since a more tolerant, sensitive approach was in fact successfully employed by the FBI to defuse hostilities and peacefully end the standoff outside the Montana Freeman compound, it is now viewed as a veritable panacea by most of today's NRM researchers.

Nevertheless, apart from the fact that the burden for avoiding a violent confrontation should not be placed entirely on one party in a dispute, in this case the authorities, and that in practice the taking of any action at all will almost invariably be interpreted as hostile by cult leaders and followers, there is another, equally compelling side to this story. Although

I would agree that it is crucially important for outsiders to obtain an accurate understanding of the worldviews of the leaders and members of these groups, and that the authorities should generally exercise patience and restraint *if the situation warrants it*, it would be very unwise to insist that they act equally cautiously and circumspectly in every situation. After all, it was *the unwillingness of the authorities to take decisive action* which resulted, in so many other instances, in tragedies that were — or at least had the potential for being — much more destructive than the one at Waco, including the Jonestown, Ordre du Temple Solaire, Aum Shinrikyo, and Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments (MRTC) cases. This is precisely what prompted Reader to argue that the Aum case "serves as a potential counterweight to the conclusions many of us had drawn from Waco," since in that instance many leading NRM scholars had been induced to uncritically defend a truly murderous cult.⁽¹⁴⁾ If Waco represented a disastrous *overreaction* by American police agencies, the Aum affair reflected a potentially catastrophic *lack of action*, until it was almost too late, by their Japanese counterparts. What this suggests is that there is no single approach that is suited to resolving all of the potential conflicts which may arise between non-mainstream religions and society at large, and hence that it is not really sensible for the authorities to rely solely on one response paradigm when dealing with violence-prone fringe groups. On the contrary, since every case has unique features, it is necessary for them to be flexible and adaptable in their approach, and to respond to the actions of each specific group in a somewhat different way. This would seem to be self-evident. Why, then, have so many NRM "experts" ended up adopting a totally one-sided, "pro-cult" approach when dealing with such complex and fluid matters?

-Jeff Bale

Notes:

(1) Introvigne has published an extraordinary number of books and articles on NRMs in a relatively short period of time. Among his most important works are *Il cappello del mago: I nuovi movimenti magici, dallo spiritismo al satanismo* (Milan: Sugar, 1990); *Indagine sul satanismo: Satanisti e anti-satanisti dal Seicento ai nostri giorni* (Milan: Mondadori, 1994); *I nuovi culti: Dagli Hare Krishna alla Scintologia* (Milan: Mondadori, 1990); and *Le nuove religioni* (Milan: Sugar, 1989). Note also the volume he edited on Freemasonry, *Massoneria e religioni* (Turin: Elle Di Ci, 1994), and the pamphlet he recently wrote to help inaugurate a new series of booklets on NRMs that he and J. Gordon Melton hope will be regularly assigned in university-level

(2) For more on CESNUR, one should begin by examining the group's own website: www.cesnur.org. One can then follow this up by examining various publications published or sponsored by CESNUR, including Massimo Introvigne & J. Gordon Melton, eds., *Pour en finir avec les sectes: Le débat sur le rapport de la commission parlementaire* (Paris: Dervy, 1996); Massimo Introvigne et al., *I nuovi movimenti religiosi: Sette cristiane e nuovi culti* (Turin: Elle Di Ci, 1990); and Richard Bergeron, *Damné Satan: Quand le diable refait surface* (Paris: Fides, 1988), which was sponsored by the French (or French Canadian) branch of CESNUR, the Centre d'Information sur les Nouvelles Religions. For a variety of less sanguine interpretations of the role and significance of CESNUR, see Miguel Martinez' CESNUR "critical page" website: www.kelebekler.com/cesnur

(3) The best general history of the MSI is that of Piero Ignazi, *Il polo escluso: Profilo storico del Movimento Sociale Italiano* (Bologna: Mulino, 1998). Throughout most of its existence, this electoral party was divided into three rival factions: a radical right current inspired by the example of the Waffen-SS and the elitist ideas of "esoteric traditionalist" philosopher Giulio Cesare ("Julius") Evola; a centrist, pro-Atlantic conservative majority which sought to obtain a much-needed legitimacy within the postwar parliamentary system; and a radical left current which looked for its inspiration to "fascism of the first hour" and the quasi-socialist Verona Charter promulgated in 1944 by Mussolini's rump Salò Republic. Prominent members of the radical factions, who were disgusted by the "reactionary" policies pursued by the MSI's "bourgeois" leaders, periodically broke away from the party and went on to form their own extraparlimentary groups. After the collapse of the First Republic, the moderate MSI majority created Alleanza Nazionale as a successor party to the MSI.

(4) For more on AC, see Giovanni Tassani, *La cultura politica della destra cattolica* (Rome: Coines, 1976), pp. 206-12. For Lefebvre and his excommunication, see the short introduction by Luc Perrin, *L'affaire Lefebvre* (Paris: Cerf, 1989). Unfortunately, most of the books dealing with this controversial matter are highly biased, either enthusiastically favoring or strongly opposing the indefatigable Monseigneur.

(5) For the transition from the First to the Second Republic, see Mark F. Gilbert, *The Italian Revolution: The End of Politics, Italian Style?* (Boulder: Westview, 1995). For AN, see Piero Ignazi, *Postfascisti? Dal Movimento Sociale Italiano ad Alleanza Nazionale* (Bologna: Mulino, 1994); Marco Tarchi, *Dal MSI ad AN: Organizzazione e strategie* (Bologna: Mulino, 1997); and Paolo Nello, *Il Partito della fiamma: La Destra in Italia fra MSI al AN* (Pisa: Istituti Editoriali e Poligrafici Internazionali, 1998), as well as books about its current leader, e.g., Goffredo Locatelli, *Duce,*

addio: La biografia di Gianfranco Fini (Milan: Longanesi, 1994). For Forza Italia, see Domenico Mennitti, ed., *Forza Italia: Radiografia di un evento* (Rome: Ideazione, 1997); and Carmen Golia, *Dentro Forza Italia: Organizzazione e militanza* (Venice: Marsilio, 1997), as well as works about its leader, media baron Silvio Berlusconi, e.g., Giovanni Ruggeri & Mario Guarino, *Berlusconi: Inchiesta sul Signor TV* (Milan: Kaos, 1994).

(6) For more on TFP's doctrines and activities, see Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution* (New Rochelle, NY: Foundation for a Christian Civilization, 1980) [a translation of the original Portuguese version, *Revolução e contra-revolução*]; and TFP, *Tradition, Family, Property: Half a Century of Epic Anticommunism* (Mount Kisco, NY: Foundation for a Christian Civilization, 1981) [a translation of *Meio século de epopéia anticomunista*]. For the group's cult-like structure and thought reform practices, see especially José António Pedriali, *Guerreiros da virgem: A vida secreta na TFP* (Sao Paulo: EMW, 1985). This work by a former TFP activist was considered so damaging that Plinio himself felt it necessary to issue a lengthy response: Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, *Guerreiros da virgem: A replica do autenticidade. A TFP sem segredos* (Sao Paulo: Vera Cruz, 1985). Note that these bitter polemics corresponded precisely to the period identified by Martinez as the crucial point in the shift of TFP's attitudes toward cults, and indeed may have played a key role in helping to precipitate that very shift. For TFP's active collaboration with the dictatorial regimes in Brazil and Chile, as well as its involvement in counterrevolutionary operations elsewhere in Latin America, see the journalistic exposés by Scott Anderson & Jon Lee Anderson, *Inside the League: The Shocking Expose of how Terrorists, Nazis and latin American Death Squads have Infiltrated the World Anti-Communist League* (New York: Dodd Mead, 1986), pp. 78, 140; and Penny Lernoux, *Cry of the People: United States Involvement in the Rise of the Fascism, Torture, and Murder and the Persecution of the Catholic Church in Latin America* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), especially pp. 294-304. To cite only a couple of illustrative examples, in Brazil leading TFP members were among the instructors who taught history and politics at the prestigious Escola Superior de Guerra (ESG: Higher War College), where the brightest junior military officers were trained and where the influential countersubversive "Doctrine of National Security" was first developed, whereas in Chile the leading ideologist of the Pinochet regime was none other than TFP activist Jaime Guzmán, who was also closely linked to the right-wing paramilitary group Patria y Libertad (Fatherland and Freedom). As yet, not a single academic historian or Latin America specialist has produced a scholarly work on TFP, an astonishing lacuna given the endless profusion of academic studies on "liberation theology" and the Catholic left in Latin America.

(7) For more on the MNR, see Alain Rollat, *Les hommes de l'extrême droite: Le Pen, Marie, Ortiz et*

les autres (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1981), pp. 171-81; and Jean-Gilles Malliarakis, *Ni Trusts Ni Soviets* (Paris: Trident, 1985), esp. pp. 63-74. For TV, see Christophe Bourseiller, *Les ennemis du système: Enquête sur les mouvements extrémistes en France* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1989), pp. 187-93. For more on Bouchet's more recent political activities, including NR and its participation in the ELF, see Jeffrey M. Bale, "'National Revolutionary' Groupuscules and the Resurgence of 'Left-Wing' Fascism: The Case of France's Nouvelle Résistance," forthcoming in *Patterns of Prejudice*. For his occultist activities, see Jean-Paul Bourre, *Les profanateurs: La nébuleuse de tous les périls. Nouvelle Droite, Skinheads, Rock metal, Néonazis* (no place: Le Comptoir, 1997), pp. 49-69 and passim; Paul Ariès, *Le retour du Diable: Satanisme, exorcisme, extrême droite* (Brussels: Golias, 1997), pp. 237-8. Bouchet's doctoral thesis was later published as *Aleister Crowley et le mouvement thélémitique* (Château-Thébaud: Chaos, 1998). There has long been a considerable overlap, both in terms of ideas and personnel, between the radical right and esoteric undergrounds. See, e.g., Eduard Gugenberger & Roman Schweidlenka, *Mutter Erde, Magie und Politik: Zwischen Faschismus und neuer Gesellschaft* (Vienna: Gesellschaftskritik, 1987); Friedrich-Paul Heller & Anton Maegerle, *Thule: Vom völkischen Okkultismus bis zur Neuen Rechten* (Stuttgart: Schmetterling, 1998); and Franziska Hundseder, *Wotans Junger: Neuleidnische Gruppen zwischen Esoterik und Rechtsradikalismus* (Munich: Heyne, 1998).

(8) For bits and pieces concerning Mayer's political background, see Jean-Yves Camus & René Monzat, *Les droites nationales et radicales en France: Répertoire critique* (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1992), pp. 232, 301, 361; and the reply of Xavier Pasquini, co-author of *Encyclopédie des sectes dans le monde* (Paris: H. Veyrier, 1984), published in the 14 October 1998 issue of *Charlie Hebdo*, which can be found on the internet. Like Introvigne, Mayer is a very knowledgeable person, a sophisticated thinker, and a very prolific author. Among his many works are *Les nouvelles voies spirituelles: Enquête sur la religiosité parallèle en Suisse* (Lausanne: Age d'Homme, 1993); *Les sectes: Non-conformismes chrétiens et nouvelle religions* (Paris: Cerf, 1988); *Les mythes du Temple solaire* (Geneva: Georg, 1996); *Religions et sécurité internationale* (Berne: Office Centrale de la Défense, 1995); and his "autobiography", *Confessions d'un chasseur des sectes* (Paris: Cerf, 1990).

(9) There are some indications of this in various articles posted on Alessia Guidi's useful website: <http://members.xoom.it/xemu>. For example, an article in the 8 September 1999 issue of *Diario della Settimana* indicates that Introvigne published an article in the more or less official journal of the Catholic Church in France, *Documentation Catholique*, wherein he argued that it was impossible to distinguish between "dangerous cults and legitimate religious movements". This elicited a protest

from Jacques Trouslard, a French priest who served as a consultant for the government's Interministerial Commission to Fight Cults, who claimed that Introvigne's views should not be considered identical to those of the Church concerning this matter. I suspect that this incident is itself indicative of the split that I have postulated between different factions of the Catholic hierarchy. In that same article, Introvigne is said to be linked both to TFP and to another conservative Catholic group known as the Legionarios de Cristo (Legionaries of Christ). This is quite revealing if true since, according to another article on the same website, the Legionarios de Cristo group is a disciplined (old-style) Jesuit-like organization that was established in Mexico in 1941 and is today intransigently supportive of the current Pope, who did much to officially validate the group's status and mission during the 1990s. This "enigmatic Catholic congregation" is headquartered in the Ateneo Regina Apostolorum seminary in Rome, its U.S. headquarters is located in Mount Kisco (NY), and it numbers 350 priests (with 2400 more in training) and 25,000 lay members in fourteen countries on four continents. It aims to create a revitalized Catholic elite and its chief activities are devoted to "re-Christianizing" Latin America in the face of the threats posed by "liberation theology" and especially charismatic Protestant sects. See Michel Arseneault, "Le nuove legioni di Giovanni Paul II: Contro-offensiva del Vaticano in America Latina," *Le Monde Diplomatique* (November 1996) [translation from French to Italian by Guidi].

Kranenborg and Barker were feigning ignorance in order to avoid the embarrassment of acknowledging that they were knowingly allowing cult members to give presentations on their own groups. But if one is kind enough to accept their statements at face value, one must then question their degree of "expertise" concerning cults.

(11) For the "satanic panic" of the 1980s and early 1990s, see, e.g., Jeffrey S. Victor, *Satanic Panic: The Creation of a Contemporary Legend* (Chicago: Open Court, 1993); Robert D. Hicks, *In Pursuit of Satan: The Police and the Occult* (Buffalo: Prometheus, 1991); James T. Richardson et al., *The Satanism Scare* (New York: A. de Gruyter, 1991); and Jean S. La Fontaine, *Speak of the Devil: Tales of Satanic Abuse in Contemporary England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1994). Of course, there are innumerable journalistic and evangelical publications that actively promote the "satanist underground" thesis, but these are based almost entirely on fanciful "firsthand" accounts and sensationalistic conspiracy theories rather than reliable evidence.

(12) For the Waco affair, see Stuart A. Wright, ed., *Armageddon in Waco: Critical Perspectives on the Branch Davidians* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996); James D. Taylor & Eugen V. Gallagher, *Why Waco?: Cults and the Battle for Religious Freedom in America* (Berkeley: University of California, 1997); and Dick J. Reavis, *The Ashes of Waco: An Investigation* (New York: Syracuse University, 1998), all of which are written by cult sympathiz-

Note: I would like to correct two minor errors that appeared in my introduction to the first part of this "Cult Wars" series. First, Jeffrey Hadden is now a professor at the University of Virginia. Second, the Ordre du Temple Solaire (OTS: Order of the Solar Temple) case was not merely a "mass suicide". It involved both the voluntary suicide of the group's leaders, and the ritualistic (or revenge) murders of dozens of other members of the group. Also, I would like to thank Kevin Coogan, Miguel Martinez and Alessia Guidi for their assistance with this article.

The Secret Story of a Cult Apologist: Massimo Introvigne, CESNUR and the Brazilian Right-Wing Organization, "Tradition, Family and Property" (TFP)

by Dr. Miguel Martinez

CESNUR and Alleanza Cattolica

Massimo Introvigne, on the cover of his own books, always claims to be one of the directors of another association, called Alleanza Cattolica (hereafter AC). Introvigne

(10) Nor is gross ignorance confined to the legions of academic NRM "experts" who may be unknowingly being manipulated by CESNUR. Even certain members of CESNUR's "outer circle" sometimes seem to be wholly in the dark. Note, e.g., the astonishing admission by Reender Kranenborg, the organizer of a 1997 CESNUR conference in Holland, that he had never even heard of Nueva Acropolis! Or the statement by Moonie expert Eileen Barker, a CESNUR member and founder of yet another "cult apologist" organization in Britain — the Information Network Focus on Religious Movements (INFORM) — who publicly acknowledged that she had no idea what the initials "VPM" stood for (in fact, they stand for the Verein zur Förderung Psychologischen Menschenkenntnis (VPM: Association for Research on Human Psychological Knowledge), even though she was chairing a panel that included a self-serving presentation on this very same German psychotherapy cult! (Both of these remarks were cited by Herman de Tollenaere in an article in *De Groene Amsterdammer*, which was reprinted in the last issue of *Hit List*.) It could be, of course, that both

ers. Compare various official government reports, e.g., United States, Department of Justice, *Report on the Events at Waco, Texas, February 28 to April 19, 1993* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1993); United States, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, *Report of the Department of the Treasury on the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Investigation of Vernon Wayne Howell, also known as David Koresh* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1993); and United States, Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on the Judiciary, *Materials relating to an Investigation into the Activities of the Federal Law Enforcement Agencies toward the Branch Davidians* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1997). There is also a sensationalistic anti-Koresh popular literature.

(13) The quote is from Ian Reader, "Scholarship, Aum Shinrikyo, and Academic Integrity", *Nova Religio* 3:2 (April 2000), p. 378.

(14) *Ibid.*

is currently one of only five "consultori" (an unusual word indeed in Italian) of AC. Another, Alfredo Mantovano, is a leading figure in Alleanza Nazionale, Italy's right-wing party, and was briefly its "national coordinator", a job which put him practically in charge of the entire party, under the national secretary Gianfranco Fini. This is rather surprising, and may reveal something of the political clout of AC, if we remember that Mantovano joined Fini's party only three months before. (see "An, primo atto dell'epurazione", *La Stampa*, December 11, 1997, p. 6)

However, AC never bets on one horse only — Introvigne is a prominent member of another right-wing party, the CCD [Centro Cristiano Democratico]. Another Alleanza Cattolica member, Vietti, was also the group leader in Parliament of the same party. Of course, there is nothing wrong per se about holding membership in various organizations, however controversial some of them

may be. After all, as Introvigne objected in an e-mail note of his, "the most usual confusion about CESNUR is not to be able to distinguish individual affiliations of directors with the association as such." The problem, however, is this: is Introvigne a member of AC; or is CESNUR itself a member of AC?

AC is an organization which has been around for roughly thirty years, and has only 200-300 members. Living at the very margin of the official Catholic Church, for reasons which will soon become clear, it has rarely made headlines; until quite recently, it was quite a poor organization, without any influence whatsoever. Things changed for two reasons: the political success in 1994 of the right, a congerie of parties which obtained millions of votes without the leadership to manage them, opened up incredible prospects for AC which had long been grooming its followers as an intellectual "élite". The other factor was the sudden, worldwide success of Introvigne as a newly-born "sociologist".

Even a cursory look at the homepage of AC, which proudly boasts that "militants of AC have founded" three organizations — CESNUR, IDIS (the Institute for Social Doctrine and Information), and ISIN (Institute for the Study of the 'Insorgenze') — clearly shows that the relationship between CESNUR and AC goes farther than

AC's politics are no secret: on March 26, 1994, AC published an "appeal" for the coming political elections, inviting voters to "take part actively, voting for the lists which present the clearest opposition to the 'radical mass party', that is, the front formed by socialcommunists and 'progressives', who are promoting the de-Christianization of the Italian people." This campaign was part of a larger campaign, well-publicized in *Il Secolo d'Italia*, the daily of the party then known as MSI-National Right [Movimento Sociale Italiano-Destra Nazionale] (e.g., in the January 6, 1994 issue) called "A human and political Christian action for rebuilding the identity of the Italian people". In the manifesto of this campaign, Giovanni Cantoni, the AC leader, says that Liberté and Fraternité may be acceptable, but Egalité is definitely not. In other words, militants of the right-wing organization AC create right-wing groups. Of course they are quite free to do so, as long as they do not represent themselves to be practitioners of the science of sociology, as opposed to a world of "amateurs".

AC is also active among the so-called "far right", a term which in Italy covers a very complicated world of small and conflicting organizations. Just one example out of many — on April 24, 1998, Aldo Carletti, member of both CESNUR and AC — spoke at a meet-

Cantoni, officially "National Regent" of the organization. "Regent" is a rather unusual term in Italian, where it can either mean an interim functionary or something like a "ruler", the reason why this term is occasionally used by some right-wing groups which wish to avoid such democratic terms as "president". Of course the official explanation is the first, but Cantoni's interim has lasted several decades. In any case, a member of Alleanza Cattolica confirmed the fact that this term is used in the same sense as in English — a temporary ruler governing in the name of another, in this case (for ideological reasons which shall become evident later on) the Virgin Mary. Giovanni Cantoni is also co-author, together with Introvigne, of a booklet called *Libertà religiosa, 'sette' e 'diritto di persecuzione'*, which is one long attack on so-called "anti-cult movements".

Alleanza Cattolica, unlike Massimo Introvigne, has never hidden its extremist views, which of course it has a full right to hold. Here for example is the text of a leaflet of this organization, dating back to the mid-Seventies, which refers to one of Italy's endless and unimportant political "crises", when government posts were reshuffled for the thousandth time, followed by elections with tiny percentage changes. The "red government" referred to was a typically moderate coalition of Christian Democrats and

mere "personal affiliation". IDIS is so closely associated with the right-wing party, Alleanza Nazionale, that every week the daily of this party — *Il Secolo d'Italia* — devotes a full page to it. Indeed, IDIS may be said to be the leading right-wing think tank in Italy, and derives its ideas largely from two sources: the ideology of Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira (more about this later) and US "neo-conservatives". "Insorgenze", in the initials of ISIN, refers to the anti-Napoleonic uprisings in Italy at the close of the eighteenth century, an episode which has been completely and undeservedly deleted from Italy's history. But of course the purpose of this institute is highly ideological: to create an alternative historical myth to the secular Risorgimento of Cavour and Garibaldi, and to the "Communist" resistance movement. Like CESNUR, ISIN includes some serious scholars, who are not always aware of the wider agenda they have been fitted into.

ing organized in Varese by the Centro Studi Trans Lineam (see *Orion*, n. 163, April 1998, p. 39). Writing in *Orion*, a magazine which reflects many different opinions within this milieu, Lucio Tancredi has accused AC of infiltrating the "far right" and trying to convert it to US-style neo-conservatism. There is, as we shall see, a reason behind this: the "Counter-Revolutionary" thinking which inspired the Catholic movement AC also inspired such non-Christian works as Julius Evola's *Revolt Against the Modern World* and René Guénon's *The Crisis of the Modern World*. Their ideas are by no means identical, but despite quite different views on Christianity, there are points of contact in the "spiritual politics" of all three, and in their views on the "decadence of the modern world".

Introvigne is by no means the only person in CESNUR, at least in Italy, to be involved with AC. A person closely involved is the leader of AC himself, Giovanni

Socialists, with outside support by Italy's extremely cautious Communist Party: "Vote anti-communist, but don't stop there! The red Andreotti-Berlinguer government has 'committed suicide' in order to anticipate the historic compromise [between the Christian Democrats and the Communist Party], and the historic compromise is the forerunner of a Communist regime." This rather boring power juggling leads the author of the leaflet to compare the Italian situation with Cambodia, no less, and he finishes with this dramatic call to action: "Do not despair! Help yourself so God may help you!"

Before Introvigne Became a "Sociologist": From the Seminary to the War against "Pornocratic Sex Priests"

We have already seen [in a portion of this manuscript not published here] how controversial the issue of Introvigne's cre-

dentials is. Just five years before he burst onto the world scene as a sociologist and as the greatest expert on "New Religious Movements", here is his curriculum as it appears on the dust jacket of his book, *Pornografia e rivoluzione sessuale* (Chiavenna: Libreria San Lorenzo, 1983):

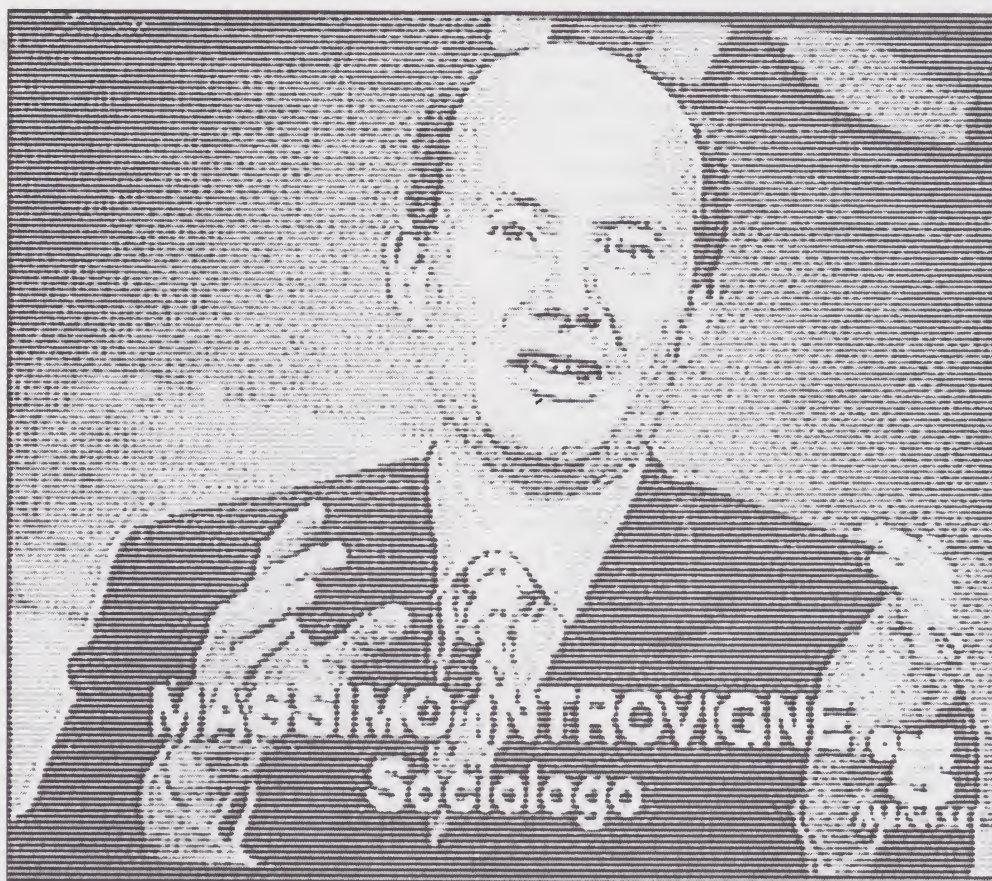
"Massimo Introvigne was born in Rome on July 14, 1955. Formerly a student of the Jesuit Fathers, he obtained his bachelor's degree in philosophy at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, with a composition on the moral philosophy of Wittgenstein. He then graduated in law at the University of Turin, with a thesis on the contemporary juridical philosophy in the United States. Part of this work, after editing and reviewing, will appear in the Annals of the Law Institute of Turin. At the same University, Introvigne currently does teaching and research in the field of philosophy of law.

He works in the legal profession as a consultant on industrial property, and belongs to several professional associations. In this role, he writes for several specialised Italian and foreign journals (especially in the United States) and has attended law conferences in Italy and abroad, where he has read papers on industrial property, licences and unfair competition.

Ever since the first years of high school, he has been a militant of Alleanza Cattolica, a civic and cultural body which has the purpose of educating men and spreading ideas according to the social principles of the Church and the political and social magisterium of the Popes. He writes regularly for *Cristianità*, the official organ of Alleanza Cattolica, especially on philosophical and moral issues; in the same magazine, he has also carried out studies on the Catholic culture of Piedmont and on 19th century saints in Turin.

As a speaker, he has spoken to various Italian citizens during the meetings of 'friends of *Cristianità*', organised by the magazine and by Alleanza Cattolica, as well as in seminars and lectures organised by Alleanza Cattolica, alone or together with other groups or associations."

Considering his later ideas on anti-cult legislation, it is interesting to note that on page 20 of this booklet, Introvigne says that "Pornography — even when it calls itself artistic — can and must be forbidden on the basis of an ethical judgement, which is at the same time in harmony with the canons of aesthetics as they comply with reason". What should a "consociato" (presumably



I'M A QUALIFIED PATENT LAWYER, BUT I PLAY A SOCIOLOGIST ON TV....Our main man Mass gesticulates on Italian television.

meaning, an AC member) do about it? Pressure magistrates with briefs and denunciations, of course, while "controlling and judging those politicians who in a thousand ways favour pornography." (p. 21)

Introvigne's ideas — and AC's — come directly from the writings of the Brazilian extremist Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, a fact which he now tends to hide in his works. Much more will be said about this unusual personality later on, but here it may be interesting to note how Introvigne, in those early days, was far more explicit. In the same booklet on pornography (p. 23), Introvigne said: "Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, in the 3rd Italian edition of his book *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, spoke of a 'IV Revolution', following the I Protestant and absolutist Revolution, the II (liberal and of the Enlightenment) Revolution, and the III and Communist Revolution." This "Fourth Revolution" is supposedly based on drugs, pornography and — in those remote days — on cults.

Massimo Introvigne's debt to Corrêa de Oliveira is apparent in dozens of early documents. To describe the ideas of the Venerable Francesco Faà di Bruno, who died in 1888, decades before Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira was born, Introvigne finds nothing better than to quote Plinio, in a way which looks as if he were quoting the 19th century

priest; only a footnote makes it clear that the quotations are from Plinio (and from an anti-Masonic text by E. Delassus published and distributed by Alleanza Cattolica) and not from Faà di Bruno: "Perhaps, however, Francesco Faà di Bruno's secret lies in his clear understanding of the terms of the 'problem of the present hour'. He clearly understood that the anti-Christian Revolution is 'universal, is one, is total, is dominating', that it 'extends, by the very nature of things, to all the faculties of the soul, to every field of culture.'" (Massimo Introvigne in *Cristianità*, April 1979)

Massimo Introvigne joined AC when he was very young, after a short spell in the Monarchist Youth Front. In his curricula, he says he studied "at the Gregorian University in Rome" (this reference is generally purged from his more recent writings); actually, he did so as a seminarian (*Sodalitium*, n. 35, October-November 1993), where he wrote regularly for the right-wing weekly *Il Borghese* under the pseudonym of "Lo Svizzero", i.e., as the "Swiss Guard" defending the Pope against Liberation Theology, then much the fashion.

Despite this defence of the Pope, the entire movement of AC, including young Introvigne, long flirted with Monsignor Lefebvre's Fraternity of Saint Pius X; at the Ecône seminary, he was a much appreciated



lecturer.

A former seminarian graphically described his recollection of young Introvigne, in flowing cassock, discussing priestly fashions with a colleague. A photograph in *L'Europeo* (June 1977) shows young Introvigne, not in the cloth and before his hairline began to recede but with the same intense expression in his eyes, standing as close as possible to Monsignor Lefebvre in a great meeting of Catholic traditionalists at the Roman villa of the Pallavicini family, an event which the Vicar General for Rome, Cardinal Ugo Poletti, branded "as an episode to be forgotten" in *L'Osservatore Romano*. And Introvigne of course promptly did forget the episode. When Lefebvre was excommunicated, AC quickly sized up the situation and opted for supporting the Vatican.

Introvigne became AC's expert on "moral philosophy", meaning an in-depth study on changing sexual mores and pornography, his pet interest before moving on to Satanism (which, along with vampires, is probably the subject Introvigne has the deepest personal involvement in). In those early days,

Introvigne's main thrust was forbidding people to exercise their personal freedom to use drugs or read pornographic material. For example, in an article in *Cristianità* (April 1978), under the title "Un aspetto della guerra sovversiva: la rivoluzione della droga e la 'filosofia chimica'", Introvigne tells the reader that drugs are the next step of the Revolution, "beyond Communism, after Communism". Drugs are part of Mao Tse-Tung's theory that "every man is an objective of the revolutionary war", and fit into "the scheme suggested by prof. Corrêa de Oliveira in his work *Rivoluzione e Contro-Rivoluzione*." In order to set up "the line of a resistance and of a counter-revolution," laws must be made stricter: "From a juridical point of view, one can identify the snare hidden in permissive laws, replying to the further sophistry according to which the drug addict is supposed to harm nobody, and that it would therefore be 'unfair' to deny him the 'freedom to take drugs', and one can prove how this statement is not only immoral (since, in an order which respects natural law, no one has the right to

make an attempt against a life, whether another's or one's own), but is also radically false from the point of view of facts, since it is not only false to say that the drug abuser 'harms no one'; drug abusers are also highly dangerous from a criminal point of view, committing many different crimes."

Whatever one may think of these opinions, they reflect in an interesting manner on Introvigne's later career. First of all, the explanation of the social phenomenon of drug addiction is not sociological (no mention is made, e.g., of the role of consumer society in spreading addiction) but theological-political (some might speak of a conspiracy theory); the purpose of his study is not academic but "counter-revolutionary", and as such does not even consider possible objections (for example, crimes committed by drug addicts may be committed because drugs are illegal); finally, Introvigne — though promoting a "counter-revolutionary social restoration" as the only final solution to the problem — suggests stricter legislation against what libertarians hold to be a "private matter".

When Introvigne used to Hate "Cults" and Like "Apostates"

Alleanza Cattolica radically changed its views on cults at the end of 1985. Rather more difficult to establish is whether Introvigne did too, for the simple reason that Introvigne hardly ever touched the issue before that year. However, we have seen how AC and Introvigne are virtually synonymous: AC's current line on "apostates" and the use of the word "setta" ("sect" or "cult") are today identical with Introvigne's, and no writing by Introvigne before 1985 shows the slightest deviation from the party line on any of the issues he did deal with at the time; so I believe we can freely compare writings on the subject by Introvigne today with those by AC authors before 1985. In any case, there is an article by Introvigne himself, previous to the great shift of the mid-Eighties. In 1985 he wrote one of his first essays on what he definitely would not have then called a "New Religious Movement", the Jehovah's Witnesses. ("I Testimoni di Geova: un profetismo gnostico" in *Quaderni di Cristianità*, Spring 1985, p. 20 ff.) The opening paragraph of this nineteen-page article speaks for itself:

"A privileged witness: Raymond Franz"

Literature on the Jehovah's Witnesses already includes the often worrying testimonies of people who have left this cult [setta] to join the Catholic Church, like Günther Pape, or some Protestant group, such as William J. Schnell, George Terry, Richard Cotton, John Bevins or William Cetnar. The book *Crisis of Conscience* by Raymond Franz, published in the United States in 1983, however, offers for the first time the testimony of a member of the Governing Body who, after having been part of the Governing Body — the supreme government of the Jehovah's Witnesses, considered to be the channel for communication between God and his people — left the organisation and took a critical attitude towards the cult [setta]."

The word "setta" (like the rather offensive "protestantico") occurs again twice in the following paragraph, and many more times in the text. On the following page (p. 21), Introvigne has something quite kind to say about what he would doubtless have subsequently labelled as the "atrocious story" of a "professional enemy": "Therefore, on May 22, 1980, Raymond Franz resigned from the Governing Body, to which he had belonged for nine years, and discovered he had to start a new life, without any personal experience or academic degree, since he had

devoted all of his previous existence to activity as a full-time Jehovah's Witness." On p. 22, we even read the following:

"The personal events of Raymond Franz' life have an interest which goes beyond the individual case of the author of *Crisis of Conscience*, since they bring out the cultic spirit [*spirito di setta*] which inspires the entire organisation of the Jehovah's Witnesses and which drives them to strike out systematically and ferociously against any inside dissenter, without feeling the need to provide arguments or explanations. His is certainly a partial view; however, on the basis of the documents which he presents any reader with some experience of law will find it hard not to share the conclusion that 'every right is on the side of the accusers, and the accused have no rights at all.'"

Introvigne then tells us what the "cultic spirit" ("spirito di setta") is all about: "On the contrary, the law and the court system inside the Jehovah's Witness organisation, show the cultic spirit in its most typical character, which consists of denying explanations to members and in imposing decisions which have no rational motives and are not argued rationally." (p. 23) The cultic spirit and totalism go hand in hand; Introvigne compares Jehovah's Witnesses with Communism and National Socialism: "Gnostic totalitarianism — as the organisation Raymond Franz describes 'from the inside' shows — appears no less clearly in the cult [setta] of the Jehovah's Witnesses, the structure of which is a seminarium and a model of totalitarian organisation, based on millennialist beliefs, which claims to grow and impose itself on the world by constantly increasing its 'converts'." (p. 38) This is what Introvigne then had to say about "apostates".

Nine years later, Introvigne, writing in the right-wing daily *Il Secolo d'Italia* (Massimo Introvigne, "I nuovi movimenti religiosi", *Secolo d'Italia*, November 22, 1996), would say: "Just because of the totally offensive meaning which the word 'cult' [setta] has taken on, a synonym in public opinion for a socially dangerous group, university studies on this issue have by now largely abandoned it, replacing it with the more neutral expression 'new religious movement' and 'new religion'." Introvigne of course is quite right about the perils of the loose use of the term: in its pre-CESNUR days, *Cristianità* used to speak of "la setta comunista" and even "la setta abortista".

Just like the more recent version, the early Mr Introvigne was not working separately from his organization. Not long before

Introvigne's attack on the "Jehovah cult"; the March-April 1984 issue of *Cristianità* devoted a full page to a meeting, "also sponsored by Alleanza Cattolica", on "A cultic [settaria] presence in Sicily: Jehovahism", and held in Palermo. Of course Introvigne, not yet being an expert on the issue, was not among the speakers. "Apostates" played a leading role in the meeting: "Testimonies of pain for so many victims of Jehovahism, and a feeling of liberation after having left the Jehovaist organisation, were expressed by three former members of the cult [setta], who, describing their own stories, showed how it is always the weakest who fall into the trap of psychological suggestion, of a new Manicheism and of feelings of hatred for all those who are not, and above all for those who cannot be, initiated." ("Una presenza settaria in Sicilia: il geovismo", in *Cristianità*, March-April 1984, p. 8)

In another conference (again, Introvigne is not listed among the speakers), held in Massa Carrara in 1983 "to deal with the expansion of the cult", Alleanza Cattolica pointed out how Jehovah's Witnesses use their theology for purposes of practical exploitation: "One interesting feature of the 'practice' of the Jehovah's Witnesses is how they manage to finance their propaganda operations: having laid down the principle that the follower belongs entirely to the association, they have succeeded in setting up a publishing venture which can count on virtually free labour, with some very obvious advantages in terms of profit!" ("Un convegno di studi sul geovismo", in *Cristianità*, April 1983, p. 12)

On April 25, 1985, as *Cristianità* proudly related under the usual heading of "the good fight" (*Cristianità*, May 1985, n. 121, p. 13), AC organized a meeting in Matera on "Catholic Truth and the Jehovaist cult" (Verità cattolica e la setta geovista). Speakers included Ernesto Zucchini, later involved in CESNUR, but also the "testimonies of two former members of the cult [setta]: Dr Achille Aveta, who some years ago left the Jehovah's Witnesses, an organisation which he had belonged to since his childhood, denouncing the doctrinal forgeries and the totalitarian nature of the Jehovaist structure, and Dr Walter Palmieri, whose speech showed the difficulties in the path back to Catholic truth for those — and they are many — who leave the cult [setta]." In the afternoon, a professor of law touched upon an issue which Introvigne would find untouchable only a few years later: the legal aspects of the rules of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

In the June-July 1985 issue of *Cristianità*, Alleanza Cattolica was still organizing meetings denouncing Satanic cults ("Il demonia-

co luogo teologico, fenomeno sociale, categoria storica", in Turin, June 11, 1985; although Introvigne lives in Turin, he is not mentioned in the article). Therein the "journalist Gianluigi Marianini presented the results of his inquiries into the worrisome presence of Satanists in Turin...and showed how an increasing number of people are led into Satanic cults [sette sataniche] from apparently harmless astrological circles, through magic and spiritualism." Any reader of Introvigne's writings will recognize all the marks of the "anti-cult movement" — "sensationalizing journalists", "confusion between different kinds of new religions", and the "abusive use of the term cult" — in one paragraph. Introvigne, apparently not yet an "expert" on such matters, was not a speaker at either of these meetings. Yet only a few years later, Introvigne could proudly boast that he was one of the few non members to be regularly invited to attend black masses in Turin. (see Maria Grazia Cutuli, "Il diavolo è fra noi", *Epoca*, September 28, 1993)

Perhaps rightly, the scholar Introvigne in recent years defended the Catholic pentecostal-charismatic group Renewal in the Spirit against the accusation of being a cult (*Cristianità*, n. 269, September 1997, p. 9); however, in the same issue of the same magazine, we learn that the believer Introvigne gave the introductory speech at a convention of the same organization, called "When the Son of Man Returns, Will He Still Find Faith in the World?" Things were quite different back in 1977, when the May issue of *Cristianità* devoted an article to the same group. The author of course was not yet Introvigne, but Pellegrino Costa. The quotation marks in the title say everything: "'Catholic' pentecostalism — towards 'tribalization' of the Church?" ("Tribalization" being an oblique reference to Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira's notion that the Church in Latin America was being "tribalized" by progressive missionaries). Typically, the essay starts out with the words: "In the third Italian edition of the essay *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, the author, Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, identifies 'Catholic' pentecostalism as one of the symptoms of the Fourth Revolution inside the Church." Catholic pentecostals are compared to a long list of ancient heresies and associated with the US drug culture of the '60s. Finally, they are diabolical:

"This, in brief, is the pentecostal doctrine: however, destroying reason and rejecting the guidance of the Church means falling prey to the imagination and to diabolical deception, which is always present. Thomas Aquinas teaches that the

devil can act on man's imagination and outside senses, can create prodigies thanks to the excellence of his angelic nature, and can induce perceptible tenderness and sweetness in order to lead uncautious souls to perdition. Pentecostalism, with its irrational manifestations and superstitious rites, certainly favours this operation by the devil on its followers." (p. 7)

Very obviously, an enormous change in Introvigne's thinking took place somewhere between 1985 and 1988, when Introvigne was already expressing the same conspiracy theories about the "anti-cult" movement he still holds today.

When Introvigne's Friends were into "Deprogramming"

Introvigne often tries to prove his main point — that no legal steps should be taken against cults — by noting the fact that the Italian courts decided that the law against *plagio*, roughly "undue influence", cannot be applied to them, as the notion is too general. Indeed, one of Introvigne's favourite jokes is based on a typo in the French parliament's report on cults, where "plagio" was referred to as "piaggio": "The legal part of the report mentions 'the existence in Italy of the crime of 'piaggio' [sic], or brainwashing. 'Piaggio' is a well-known Italian brand of motorcycles. The crime of *plagio* — similar to brainwashing — was created during the Fascist regime and was removed from the penal code many years ago — in 1981 — by the Constitutional Court, as being contrary to the Italian Constitution" (G. Cantoni & M. Introvigne, *Libertà religiosa, 'sette' e 'diritto di persecuzione'* [Piacenza: Cristianità, 1996], p. 124). However, Introvigne prudently leaves out the history of how Italian courts came to such a decision. The reader should take note that this statement by Introvigne appears in a book co-authored by the "regent" of AC and published by *Cristianità* in Piacenza, a very small town in northern Italy which happens to be where the headquarters of AC are located. This location is no coincidence.

In the 1960's, two young brothers in Piacenza fell under the spell of Aldo Braibanti, a self-proclaimed homosexual, Marxist and atheist all in one. Agostino Sanfratello, the elder brother, became a militant leftist, but was then called up for military duty. This break from Braibanti's influence supposedly allowed him to get his own ideas back. Giovanni, the other brother, on the other hand, went to live with Braibanti. The worried parents, together with Agostino, tracked down the place where the two were

living. They swept up Giovanni, packed him into a racing car and locked him up in a psychiatric clinic (November 2, 1964). Court documents refer the testimony of one of the kidnappers: "We managed to drag Giovanni to the bottom of the stairs... during the trip, Giovanni continued to move, saying 'Four people against one!'...Braibanti started to have a nervous attack, shouting 'Giovanni, don't go!' I held Braibanti, and at a certain point his glasses fell off." (quoted in Eco Moravia et al, *Sotto il nome di plagio* [Milano: Bompiani, 1969], p. 45) In other words, a classic deprogramming, exactly as Introvigne, speaking critically of deprogramming, would himself write many years later: "'Deprogrammers', on instructions generally from a member's parents (and at their expense: a 'deprogramming' today costs between twenty and forty million Lire), kidnap the member of a new cult, keep him in an isolated place and use a series of methods — ranging from enticement to threats, and sometimes including physical violence — until the subject gives in and forswears his cult membership." (Massimo Introvigne, *I nuovi culti: dagli Hare Krishna alla Scientologia* [Milano: Mondadori, 1990], p. 194) The deprogramming was followed by a trial against Braibanti, accused of *plagio*, who was sentenced by what was certainly quite a prejudiced court of Catholics and anti-Communists. The trial, in 1968, provoked a great mobilization by intellectuals against the law.

The fascinating aspect of the case is that Agostino Sanfratello himself founded Alleanza Cattolica in the wake of the trial — the very movement Introvigne is proud to be a leader of was founded on an episode of deprogramming. Indeed, almost the only case of deprogramming in Italian history. During the Braibanti trial, the opposite sides were very clearly drawn: on the one hand, conservative, anti-Communist Catholics; on the other hand, the very same "secular humanists" Introvigne now claims favor deprogramming. Although Sanfratello later dropped out of the organization, briefly becoming a Lefebvre seminarian, the national offices are still in Piacenza.

Alleanza Cattolica and Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property

To understand why Introvigne and AC made a 180-degree turn around the end of 1985 on cult-related issues, and why the former suddenly discovered his vocation as a "sociologist" and an "expert on New Religious Movements", requires a long explanation.

What is Alleanza-CESNUR's "good strug-

gle"? What are the ideas that these young men in suits and ties should wave their flags for? The self-description of AC, on its own homepage, is an elegant combination of soft (and complicated) speech and tough contents. It calls for a "positive and apologetic, hence also polemical, propagation and the implementation of the social doctrine of the Church, the application of the perennial natural and Christian moral system to changing historical circumstances. Its action lies in the field of Christian implementation of the temporal order; it is moved by political charity." Now, Introvigne is either a bad member of AC (but their official magazine certainly does not seem to say so) or else CESNUR is here to do "political charity"; building, as the web page goes on to say, "a civilization which can truly be called Christian, as it respects divine rights and lives consciously within the boundaries laid down by the doctrine and morals of the Church." The hope for a historical implementation of such a civilization is supported by the Virgin's promise at Fatima: "In the end, my Immaculate Heart shall triumph". The jargon is heavy, but so are the contents: we are not talking about individuals living within the framework laid down by Christian "doctrine and morals". We are talking about a whole society governed by Canon Law. And this appears as a dream for the immediate future, thanks to the help of the Virgin in setting up a new "civilization".

In the meantime, while waiting to put society into the "frontiers" of the new civilization, AC pays special attention to fighting "those forces which aim at reversing the Ten Commandments and at implementing doctrinal and moral lies, with a special reference to the historical process which goes from the crisis of the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation to Socialcommunism and beyond, that is the Revolution which seeks to be enthroned in the place of God and His law." In other words, the enemies of AC (and CESNUR) range from Michelangelo to Luther, Marx and "beyond".

Whatever one may think of Alleanza Cattolica's ideology, the organization is by no means a cult. It has no charismatic leadership, and its 200-300 members are free to pursue their own studies and personal careers. Personal opinions within the group vary, within a limited range, of course. No exacting demands in terms of money or time are made on members, and those who leave the organization are in no way victimised. Although the comparison would hardly please the leadership, it is not unlike Freemasonry — somewhat secretive, but basically an association of free, consenting adults. AC was founded in the wake of the Sanfratello-Braibanti deprogramming case.

However, the reason why it grew was far more important: the dramatic suffering of many Catholics whose whole worldview was shattered by Vatican II.

At least since the counter-Reformation, the Catholic explanation of reality was quite clear: all of Adam's descendants were stricken by original sin, whether this inevitably led to damnation or not; only the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross opened up a possibility of redemption through sacraments properly administered by a regularly-ordained priesthood. Liberal critics will probably comprehend only the reactionary political ideas of the organization, but the theological and sacramental aspect was probably even more important: ecumenism and the reform of the liturgy, often ruthlessly imposed by the very authorities who traditionalists expected to be there to preserve the heritage of the Church, shook the very foundations of the meaning of life for many people, who found themselves in a situation not unlike that of Native Americans when the buffaloes disappeared from the prairies.

When the world breaks down, an explanation and a ray of hope are needed in order to avoid total psychological collapse. "Counter-Revolutionary" theories, like the Ghost Dance of Native Americans or the expectation of the Messiah among Jews after the loss of their political independence, provided both. Such "Counter-Revolutionary" theories, which date back to the times of the French Revolution, provide an explanation of the world in terms of progressive decadence and dissolution, leading to an ever more dramatic crisis. The divine order of the world progressively turns into global confusion and breakdown and then into nothingness: a remote Golden Age in the past, where men, nature and God (or the gods — Counter-Revolutionary thought is often "neo-pagan") lived in harmony, like a great symphonic orchestra, finds its opposite in the solitary desperation of Internet fans clicking their way through everything and nothing.

This means that every "revolutionary" movement is considered an enemy, which of course is a more attractive notion for the middle class than for factory workers, but it would be wrong to see it simply as a mirror of class interests: genuine political interests need optimism and flexibility, and few powerful businessmen in Europe will waste their time financing pessimistic and extremist Counter-Revolutionaries; reactionary interests and reactionary idealism are by no means synonymous. Indeed, we can find similar attitudes contrasting "order" and "chaos" in quite different environments, from optimistic Freemasonry and even the more romantic aspects of Communism, to the Jehovah's Witnesses.

The situation is different, however, in Latin America, where the old landowning "aristocracy" has for centuries claimed religious authority for its right to exploit the labour of people whom God, they hold, made subordinate to them. In this remote corner of the world, reactionary interests and reactionary idealism go hand in hand. And AC's ideology — or Introvigne's ideology — comes directly from Latin America.

Alleanza Cattolica Acknowledges its Debt to "Dóctor Plinio"

 AC is proud to publish Plinio's writings in its magazine:

"[Plinio's] writings were often published again abroad, especially by the magazines of the several TFP's. In Italy, they appear in the monthly *Cristianità*, official voice of Alleanza Cattolica, and in the *Quaderni di Cristianità*, published every four months." ("In memoriam: Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira", *Cristianità*, November-December 1995, p. 6)

Here is a fuller statement on the relationship between AC and TFP, as expressed in AC's official magazine:

"Alleanza Cattolica, neither founded nor directed by Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, refers in the issues it deals with to the counter-revolutionary magisterium he expressed during his life on earth...From the testament of the Brazilian Master, Alleanza Cattolica has reason to expect a more effective help from his eternal life at this end of the century, which is also the end of a millennium, in view of a new century, which is also a new millennium. Finally, it shares with him the profound belief that the new century and the new millennium cannot but be a Christian century and millennium, a Marian century and millennium; as well as the hope, nourished by the promise of Fatima — 'In the end, my immaculate heart will triumph' — of a great and socially relevant conversion, and hence, of a restoration of Christendom" (*Ibid*, p. 7)

The complicated reference to the "millennium" reveals, in parochially correct language, Plinio's fantasies about a coming Middle Age.

The internet site of IDIS (the more political offshoot of AC) hosts a page, written by Giovanni Cantoni, "reggente" of AC, devoted to "Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira (1908-1995): a life for the Church and the Christian civilization":

"Outstanding among Corrêa de Oliveira's works was the creation of the spiritual family of the TFP's, and hence the fatherhood over them; these are civic associations of a Catholic inspiration, which in their very name are a reminder of a basic feature of social life, tradition, and of two equally basic institutions of the same, the family and private property; these organisations use pacific methods to promote such values among public opinion and fight against the cultural revolution which aims at overthrowing them."

It is a small world after all: the IDIS internet page also hosts an article by Introvigne exclusively devoted to attacking the "anti-cult movement".

The "spiritual family" of TFP is active in 26 countries — Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Columbia, Ecuador, Spain, Italy, France, Poland, Germany, the Philippines, South Africa, India, New Zealand, Australia, the United Kingdom, the USA, Peru, Portugal, Paraguay, Uruguay, Costa Rica and Venezuela; however, the "family" includes many different local branches — for example, in Italy, besides TFP itself, there are AC and Centro Lepanto, each with a great many sub-groups.

When Heresy was "blasted with execration"

In the coming "Kingdom of Mary" which this peculiar organization sees as being just around the corner, there will be little room for the "professional study" of what Introvigne calls "new religious movements". According to Plinio, the "Order born of the Counter-Revolution must shine forth" in terms of its "constant care in discovering and fighting evil in its embryonic and hidden forms, blasting it with execration and branding it with infamy, punishing it with inflexible rigour, especially as far as any efforts against orthodoxy and purity of customs are concerned; all of this in opposition to the liberal metaphysics of Revolution and its tendency to give free rein and protection to evil." These words are taken from Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, *Rivoluzione e Contro-Rivoluzione* (Italian edition), p. 126, which is of course advertised in *Cristianità*. As *Cristianità* tells us, "*Revolução e Contra-Revolução*, written in 1959, is the basic text of TFP, and provides it with the foundations of its doctrine and action." (*Cristianità*, November-December 1995, p. 5)

Quite similar words appear in *Lepanto* (June 1991), the organ of AC's sister-group, the Centro Lepanto:

"Kings and governors must make sure everybody observes the Divine and evangelical law...Authorities must make sure the laws of the Church are obeyed as well...This means that rulers must abhor and persecute no vice more than heresy in their states...Since the spiritual arms of the Church are not always sufficient to achieve this result, rulers must help the Church to drive this idol out of the Temple of God, cutting off the head and the palms of both hands, as with a dragon (1 Kings 5:4), so it can no longer speak, act or prevail."

The authoritarian agenda of TFP is therefore evident, and is in marked contrast to the remarkably tolerant views Introvigne now displays toward "new religious movements", including those which most Catholic traditionalists would consider heretical.

"Doctor Plinio" and his "Counter-Revolutionary Magisterium"

Although the AC web page makes no mention of this fact, its ideas are not original. They are based on the "counter-revolutionary magisterium" of Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, a Brazilian professor who founded an organization, which claims to constitute the "true" right, called Tradition, Family and Property (TFP), that was set up in the context of the bitter struggle by landowners against agrarian reforms. But it also had the more ambitious aim of destroying the "Revolution" and setting up a universal Christian monarchy. In Costas-Gavras' film on the Montevideo kidnapping of a US diplomat, the Tupamaros also kidnap the Brazilian consul, who was guilty of tortures in his home country: one of the accusations against him is his TFP membership.

A June 1997 roundtable in Rome revealed the way that TFP, CESNUR and AC work together. Massimo Introvigne and Giovanni Cantoni (both the "rector" of IDIS and the "regent" of AC) presented the book *Libertà religiosa e legislazione anti-sette*, co-authored by them; a prominent speaker was Juan Miguel Montes, "director of the [Italian] office of Tradition, Family and Property." (Francesco Pappalardo — himself an AC member — "Sette, il grande equivoco", in *Il Secolo d'Italia*, June 29, 1997, quoted in *Sodalitium*, December 1997, p. 68)

"Doctor Plinio" ("doctor" refers to the "Doctors of the Church"), like many other such figures, has an explanation for everything, so we might presumably call his theory a form of "sociology". It certainly is where Introvigne gets his sociology from (in fact, on its internet site, the AC offshoot IDIS

says that Master Plinio "is the author of sociological and historical studies"). The following quotations, which describe the world view of our Brazilian author, are all from the preface to *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*. More to the point, they are not taken directly from Doctor Plinio's book, but from an article published in *Cristianità*. ("La devozione mariana e l'apostolato controrivoluzionario", in *Cristianità*, November-December 1995, p. 9 ff.) In other words, they are thoughts Introvigne certainly is proud to share:

"God created Man in a happy, hierarchical world, where most obey and some give orders. However, if a person gives in in some way to the vices of pride and impurity, an incompatibility will begin to arise within him with different aspects of the Church and the order of the universe. This incompatibility may start, for example, with a dislike for the hierarchical character of the Church, then extend to and affect the hierarchy of temporal society, then finally the hierarchical order of the family...Impure Man generally tends towards liberalism: he is irritated by the existence of an order, of breaks, of a law reigning in the overflow of his senses...The result of pride and of liberalism is the desire for total equality and freedom, which is the basis of Communism... The struggle between Revolution and Counter-Revolution is basically a religious struggle...It is easy to see the role that the Virgin plays in the struggle between Revolution and Counter-Revolution...Mary is the Universal Mediator, the channel through which all grace flows. Therefore, her help is indispensable for preventing the Revolution, or for the triumph of the Counter-Revolution over the Revolution...Devotion to Mary is the *sine qua non* condition for crushing the Revolution and for the triumph of the Counter-Revolution... The Revolution is not only the result of mere human wickedness. It is the latter which opens the gates to the Devil, allowing itself to be excited, exasperated and directed...The role played by the Devil in the explosion and progress of the Revolution has been enormous."

The cult of Mary, in TFP, revolves largely around a statue of the Virgin of Fatima which supposedly wept in New Orleans before being bought by Doctor Plinio, which the organization calls the "Holy Statue", and which Plinio claimed used to provide him with precious information on the world situation. (see *Tradizione Famiglia e Proprietà: associazione cattolica o setta millenarista?*, [Rimini, 1996], p. 31) The prophecies of Fatima are of course crucial for Catholic mil-

lennialists, as they paint exactly the picture of apostasy and imminent catastrophe, followed by the mysteries of the "Third Secret", which such people already see...

Obviously reminiscing on what must have been quite unhappy childhood memories, Plinio explains:

"Let us imagine the director of an institute with very rebellious students, whom he punishes with an iron authority. After having brought them back to order, he withdraws, telling his mother: 'I know you would run this institute differently from me. You have a mother's heart. Now that I have chastised these students, I want you to govern them with sweetness...The role of the Virgin as queen of the universe is similar.'"

It is an interesting commentary on Scientology's listing of CESNUR as a "human rights resource" to see that at this point, Master Plinio says:

"When the Church sings of Her: 'You alone have exterminated the heresies of the whole universe', it is saying that Her role in this extermination was, in a way, unique. This means She directs history, because the director of the extermination of heresies is the director of the triumph of orthodoxy..."

"This and other considerations taken from the teachings of the Church open up the perspective of the Kingdom of Mary, that is of a historical age of faith and virtue, which will be inaugurated by a spectacular victory of the Virgin over the Revolution. At such a time, the Devil will be driven away and will return to his hellish den, while the Virgin will rule over mankind through the institutions she has chosen."

One can now begin to see through some of the more obscure statements Introvigne makes whenever he writes about millennialism.

The institutions the Virgin will choose to rule over mankind will most definitely not be democratic. During this coming age, which closely resembles that of the Jehovah's Witnesses, greater saints will arise than at any time in history. However, the Kingdom will be preceded by the "bagarre", roughly, "the troubles". Doctor Plinio's teachings about this "bagarre" have been summarised as follows:

"Plants will bleed; there will be a fight between angels and demons, and the TFP militants, surrounded and helped by angels, will become the instruments of

conversion or condemnation. They will then lead public campaigns to denounce evildoers. Then the good, after having been converted, will gather around TFP". (*Tradizione Famiglia e Proprietà: associazione cattolica o setta millenarista?* [Rimini, 1996], p. 35)

One interesting consequence of this future Kingdom will be that priests will no longer be needed; at least according to the former TFP followers, this is the real meaning of Plinio's following statement:

"The Kingdom of Mary will therefore be a time when the union of souls with the Virgin will reach an intensity without any precedent in history, of course with individual exceptions. What form will this supreme union take? I know of no more perfect means of implementing this union than sacred slavery to the Virgin, as taught by Saint Louis Grignon de Montfort [more on him later] in his *Treatise on True Devotion to Mary*." ("La devozione mariana e l'apostolato contro-rivoluzionario", in *Cristianità*, November-December 1995, p. 15)

Sacred Slavery (*schiavitù santa*) implies a "total consecration to the Virgin as a slave":

"This consecration is of an admirably radical nature. It includes not only the material belongings of man, but also the merits of his good deeds, his life, his body and his soul. It has no limits, since the slave, by definition, owns nothing. In exchange for this consecration, the Virgin works inside her slave in a marvelous fashion, setting up an ineffable union with him." (*Ibid*, p. 15)

Since of course the Virgin is not a legal person, slavery vows are made, in her stead, to TFP. Only in certain cases, however, does this imply total obedience to the TFP leadership: the practice, as performed in AC at least, is only a picturesque and secretive ceremony, no more demanding than, say, a Masonic initiation.

The saints in Plinio's Kingdom will, of course, be the TFP members themselves rather than ordinary Catholics:

"The fruits of this union will be seen among the Latter Day Apostles [...]. The extraordinary men who will fight against the Devil, for the kingdom of Mary, gloriously leading the struggle, until the end of time, against the Devil, the world and the flesh, are described by Saint Louis [Grignon de Montfort] as magnificent models who invite those who, in these

dark days, are fighting in the ranks of the Counter-Revolution to perfect slavery to the Virgin." (*Ibid*, p. 15)

One can well understand why the militants who would come to receive his blessing had to prostrate themselves in front of Plinio with their foreheads touching the ground; they would then kiss the armchair Plinio usually sat on (*Tradizione Famiglia e Proprietà: associazione cattolica o setta millenarista?* [Rimini, 1996], pp. 63-4).

TFP Meets with Problems

TFP considers itself to be engaged in a mortal conflict with the Left. It consequently tends to depict any trouble it may get into simply as the violent reaction of the "Revolution" against its heroic opponents, a notion which Introvigne has translated into the fiction of the "anti-cult movement". Actually, opposition to TFP has come mostly from parents of TFP members, themselves usually Catholic traditionalists, and from conservative and traditionalist Catholic quarters. There are several reasons for this.

In the first place, outside of Latin America, TFP generally keeps a low profile or operates through front organizations which the left usually does not notice. Skinhead-scalpers will turn elsewhere when they find a group like TFP, whose writings are difficult to read, which is generally unobtrusive, and which was founded by a man who sympathized with the British conservatives during the War (so much so that TFP took a pro-British stance during the Falklands War). TFP always viewed Fascism, with its optimistic cult of the State and the Nation, as a deviant form of "revolutionary socialism". Another reason is that TFP is actually far to the right of virtually every other right-wing organization. Whatever feelings people may actually harbour deep down, I know of no other right-wing organization which publicly holds that the rich are better than the poor. Even the most extreme Catholic traditionalists tend to blame the modern world on plots hatched by "International Freemasonry" or on "the banker Mafia", whereas TFP puts the blame squarely on the rebellious poor, to whom it opposes its self-styled "rightism". The third reason is doctrinal. Catholic traditionalists have problems with the "official" Church because of its supposed doctrinal deviation; but TFP, due to its Brazilian origins, is only interested in fighting agrarian reform, not in defending Church doctrine, which is why it was able to accept Vatican II and the reform of the liturgy. After all, the Pope has more battalions than Monsignor Lefebvre ever had. Also, Plinio's denial of the future role

of priests — and the current exclusion of priests from all the more secret aspects of the group — led Monsignor Castro de Mayer, for decades Plinio's patron among the Brazilian bishops, to state: "TFP is a heretical sect since, although they do not say so in words or in writing, it lives and acts according to a principle which undermines the very basis of all true Christianity, that is the Catholic church". (*Tradizione Famiglia Proprietà: Associazione cattolica o setta milenarista?*, [Rimini, 1996], p. 6)

More than its political character, it was this highly suspect theological nature of the group which led to its condemnation by the Council of Brazilian bishops: "During its 23rd plenary assembly, the Council of Brazilian bishops approved a note concerning the 'Brazilian Society for the Defence of Tradition, Family and Property', advising Catholics not to join the above mentioned Society...Its esoteric character, its religious fanaticism, the personality cult of the founder and of his mother, the abuse of the name of the Virgin Mary...can absolutely not be approved of by the Church." (*Osservatore Romano*, July 7, 1985, p. 12, n. 408, weekly Spanish edition quoted in *ibid*, frontispiece)

The terms "cult" or "sect", with their double meaning of "deviant religious behaviour compared to an institutional religion" and a "closed totalist group", are certainly ambiguous. But this condemnation of TFP reveals why the organization was certainly considered by some to be a "cult" in the first sense of the word; and why therefore this same organization took a special interest in the issue of "cults" in 1985, i.e., exactly when Introvigne too started involving himself in this matter. Former TFP members have written that Plinio was well aware of this association. Referring to cult accusations, he used to tell them: "This must not come as a surprise; since you belong to TFP, you will be treated as if you belonged to a cult by your very parents and friends! It will be terrible, and it will be hard indeed to stay faithful." (*Ibid*, p. 38)

Introvigne's Debt to Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira

We have already seen how in the past Introvigne rarely wrote an article without taking a quote from Plinio Corrêa's *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*. In public, he rarely mentions the "Doctor" today. However, Plinio's influence still appears in many ways.

For example, although Introvigne generally writes rather clearly, his writings on the Solar Temple will probably seem incomprehensible to most people. Apart from the fact that he is quite obviously trying to protect

every other cult from the fallout, what is he talking about? Something about the Knights Templars and the Second Revolution (with capital letters) eating their own children...Actually, the text is perfectly comprehensible to any reader who happens to have read Plinio's writings, but to no one else. Of course there are hundreds of cults (and other, quite innocent groups) with much the same Templar mythology and homeopathy mix as in the Solar Temple — it is only when they get on the bad side of the press that Introvigne tries to show that the criticisms are something out of the French Revolution.

This leads Introvigne to explain away the Solar Temple while saving Moon, Scientology and the like:

"The tragedy of the Solar Temple now represents — together with elements of homicide, also present at Jonestown — the suicide of another Revolution, the II Revolution, marked by relativism in its 'pure' Enlightenment form, not yet in its 'reformed' and aggressive social-communist form. Both tragedies also take place within the cultural framework of the IV Revolution, and this perhaps helps to drive small groups who are living the II and III Revolution in a panic and monastic manner. The sinister flashes of the electronic 'bonfires' of the Solar Temple thus light up a centuries' old path, and represent the apocalypse, not of religion — nor, in this case, of 'new religions' — but, in terms which are both grand and diabolic, of relativism." ("La tragedia del Tempio Solare: il suicidio di una Rivoluzione", in *Cristianità*, November 1994, p. 16.)

We can see where AC picks up the term "socialcommunist"; the Second Revolution refers to the Enlightenment and to the French Revolution, the Fourth to modern "decadence". According to Introvigne's complicated expressions, the Solar Temple was the fault of Voltaire, and Jonestown was the fault of Karl Marx. Waco, on the other hand, was a "Christian holocaust", as Introvigne titled an article in *Cristianità*, June-July 1993.

Introvigne's explanation of Jim Jones, a regularly ordained Protestant pastor who set up a quite typical American cult before leading his followers to their Jonestown doom, is much simpler: they were Communists, and Communists do that sort of thing. Introvigne, who claims that this event was the "extreme conclusion of a Marxist itinerary carried to its most logical consequences," even speaks of "Soviet advisors" at Jonestown — one wonders whether they were there to kill off their own comrades, or

to commit suicide themselves: "Jonestown, however, was the suicide of a Revolution which — to use the words of Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira — we can call the III Revolution, the socialcommunist Revolution." (*ibid*, p. 16.)

His earlier article "Il suicidio della Guyana fra mito e storia" (*Cristianità*, n. 162, October 1988) is typical of his method. Full of bibliographical footnotes, it looks quite convincing until one analyses its actual content. The first subtitle is quite explicit: "The 'anti-cult movement' and the myth of the 'suicide cult'." He is clearly more interested in dealing a blow to his personal enemies than in analysing Jonestown. He first describes the "anti-cult movement" in the same terms that recur in every other of his works on cults, saying that the anti-cult movement believes that "cult brainwashing" [sic] led to the mass suicide in Guyana.

He then goes on to demonstrate that Reverend Jones' group was actually Communist. Whether true or not, this proves nothing whatsoever. Introvigne knows that the "anti-cult movement", insofar as one can speak of a coherent set of ideas in such a mixed bag of organizations, holds that cults may be religious, commercial, therapeutic or political, and that it is *the deed and not the creed* that matters. Introvigne is well aware of this, as he repeatedly criticises this notion elsewhere. Indeed a leading cult critic, Janja Lalich, writes about this on the basis of her experience in a Marxist-feminist group. The question posed by cult critics about Jonestown is entirely different: can a closed group, whatever its ideology, create such a conditioning atmosphere as to lead its followers to commit a mass suicide, or was the mass suicide simply a sum of nearly one thousand simultaneous free decisions taken by men, women and children? Introvigne's conclusion provides no answer to this vital question: "The mistake made by the anti-cult movement, perhaps involuntary in 1978, becomes clearly deliberate in 1988, after ten years of research and whole libraries of documents proved, to anybody willing to refer to them, that the People's Temple was not a religious group, but a socialcommunist movement." ("Il suicidio della Guyana fra mito e storia", in *Cristianità*, n. 162, October 1988, p. 11)

TFP is Accused of Being a "Brainwashing Cult"

We have seen how TFP already fell under the suspicion of being a "cult" or "sect" from a religious point of view. However, it also fell under this suspicion from a sociological point of view. TFP first met with considerable problems in France, where the

organization set up the "Ecole Saint-Benoît" in 1977, a private school at Châteauroux, attended exclusively by the children of Catholic traditionalists, and run by a group of TFP militants. TFP first tried to explain away unexpected changes in the behaviour of several students by calling them "individual cases". In a meeting in 1979, the parents, the chaplain and the teachers all discovered that such cases were anything but individual, and asked TFP to cease running the school. The parents, teachers and chaplain, together with several students, drew up a fascinating booklet on the organization and its methods (reprinted by Catholic traditionalists as *Tradizione Famiglia Proprietà: associazione cattolica o setta millenarista?*).

As with many similar groups, they discovered that TFP gradually teaches its militants not to think: "You think too much: this is a temptation from the devil", is the expression a Brazilian director used when speaking to a doubting Frenchman; typically, "over-thinking" is blamed ideologically on René Descartes. Secrecy, environmental control, and constant trips to Brazil are features of the indoctrination practised by the organization. Another interesting feature, according to the French parents and priests, is the constant denigration of all other Catholic traditionalists, who are generally accused of "white heresy", meaning "revolutionary behaviour"; "black heresy", in contrast, refers to "revolutionary thoughts". In the loaded jargon of the group, TFP militants are taught to speak of their parents as "F.M.R." or *fontes minha revolução*, the "sources of my revolution"; however, parents can atone for their revolutionary tendencies by financing the movement. "It is typical to see how, when 'attacks from the family' come, militants refuse to reason with their parents; they smile and say 'I knew it was coming.'" (*ibid*, pp. 22-3) Young members are taught to manipulate their parents — as Doctor Plinio used to say, "The game you must play with this or that person is the following..." (*ibid*, p. 23)

The decisive year for understanding Alleanza Cattolica's (and Introigne's) switch-over from attacks on the "Jehovaist cult" to equally fierce attacks on the "anti-cult movement" is 1985. TFP had actually been outlawed in Venezuela in 1984. What interests us are not the facts in themselves, but the way TFP viewed them. The immediate (and rather unlikely) reason was that the organization was supposedly plotting to assassinate the Pope. This happened shortly after a former TFP member (but certainly a loner) had tried to kill the Pope at Fatima in Portugal. However, in a typical scenario, many worried parents of TFP members got involved in the issue, and TFP was mainly

accused of "being a cult".

The episode is described in *Bollettino delle 15 TFP*, Year I, n. 5, dating from around mid-1985. The title is significant: "Socialist rage strikes TFP-Resistencia". As usual in such cases, the whole episode is blamed, not on the Asociación Civil Resistencia, the local TFP organization, but on the government: supposedly, it was TFP's campaign against a socialist law passed by the ruling party which provoked the government's attack on the group. Also typically, we do not hear what the government's accusations against TFP were, but only the defence of TFP against a "series of persecutions", "a violent persecution", and a "the most intense and total propaganda campaign imaginable". What is of especial interest is TFP's claim that a "minority of parents of co-operators of Resistencia, frightened by the confusion or driven by ideological motives, took part in the libellous campaign against their own children." (*Bollettino*, p. 11) After the outlawing of the organization, the adult members — many were minors — left Venezuela together with their families. However, the document of the Parliamentary Commission calling for the outlawing of TFP said: it is a cult and not a religious group [*es una secta y no un culto*] of the far right which goes against the family, warps the minds of young people, turns its members into fanatics and brainwashes them." (private information from a Spanish friend) This statement coincides with what TFP itself said: "Resistencia, according to these slanderers, was supposed to be a 'cult' which, as such, practised 'brainwashing.'" (*Bollettino*, p. 12)

TFP's Reaction: The Invention of the "Anti-Cult Conspiracy"

As we can see, TFP was under fire as a "cult" or "sect" in both senses: as a small, heretical religious group, and as a closed group practising mind control. It ran into problems from theologians, parents and former members, in much the same way as, say, Scientology.

Many former members of the organization had started to reveal controversial aspects. TFP reacted by publishing a text, by Gustavo Antonio and Luís Sérgio Solimeo, with the significant title: *The New Atheist and Psychiatric Inquisition Calls Those They Wish to Destroy 'Cults'*, [Paris: Société Française pour la Défense de la Tradition, Famille et Propriété, 1991], a translation of a 1985 Spanish text). In the same year, TFP in Columbia published a booklet called *Brainwashing: What is it? A Machiavellian Device? Satanic?*, which of course quoted various sources to deny that "brainwashing"

existed. Fighting this "new inquisition", which was attributed — in the first text mentioned above — to "an alliance between socialist politicians and Freudian psychiatrists", called for coalitions even with those whose fate in the future Middle Age will be "inflexible punishment", that is, with other groups accused of being cults. This also involved the invention of a non-existent enemy: the "secular anti-cult movement", which supposedly operated for ideological and anti-religious purposes. Of course cult critics do exist: but in virtually every case, their organizations were founded by people with an immediate family problem and no ideological agenda of any kind. Also, "psychiatrists and socialists" know very little about TFP: the most well-documented criticisms come from Catholic traditionalists who belong to the same milieu of people.

I have not been able to track down the two early TFP booklets I mentioned, so I do not know in what relationship they stand to a booklet I have been able to get hold of, which is of decisive importance for understanding the whole issue of Introigne's war on the "anti-cult movement". The book I have, *Brainwashing: A Myth Exploited by the New 'Therapeutic Inquisition'*, dates from what we have seen to be the decisive year: 1985.

"Brainwashing": A Myth Exploited by the New "Therapeutic Inquisition"

The American Society for the Defense of
Tradition, Family and Property
The Foundation for a Christian Civilization

Although still in a relatively primitive form, this booklet contains every idea that Introigne would later develop: it is indeed quite obviously the very archetype of all his future writings. The only difference is that it does not claim to be a work of academic scholarship. Like most extremist publications, it is anonymous, being signed merely by "The American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property (TFP) and the Foundation for a Christian Civilization, Inc." The frontispiece also specifies that "this study has been published in Colombia and Brazil." It is not easy to understand the origin of this text: although the contents are definitely from the USA, the book is a trans-

lation from Brazilian Portuguese.

The text is divided into two quite distinct parts: a foreword by Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, setting down the ideological guidelines for the war against the "anti-cult movement", and a larger part, anonymous, which is mainly a collection of quotes from various personalities which all tend to prove that something called "brainwashing" does not exist. These quotations, as we see, are somewhat insubstantial; but they do pose a question: how did this Brazilian organisation suddenly manage to find so many quotations from US scholars in its very first foray into this field? A Brazilian expert on Fatima prophecies would not even know where to look for such items as an article by Faber, Harlow and West in *Sociometry*, vol. 20, no. 4, December 1957, pp. 271-285, to quote a typical bibliographical reference. This is merely a hypothesis, but one does suspect that this text was largely copied from some other publication by a US group, perhaps the Unification Church, which had had much more experience in rebutting accusations of being a cult. It would probably not be difficult to track down the original. Certainly, none of these ideas were new: TFP merely adopted a method for responding to critics which had been applied for years in the USA by people with far greater access to legal or intellectual resources.

The foreword by the Doctor, in its very title, clearly lays down the approach which Introvigne would still be following over a decade later: "Brainwashing and Cult: Two Indefinable Catchwords That Are Paving the Way for Worldwide Tyranny and Religious Persecution". A series of "extravagant" organisations are supposedly arising around the world: "The desire to halt the criminality engendered by some organizations and to preserve modern society from the influence of groups whose professed goals, while not criminal in themselves, differ dramatically from those generally accepted, has generated a widespread anticult movement that is especially active in the United States". (p. 7) Here we can see where Introvigne picked up the term "anticult movement" from. Plinio tends to make a complete separation between a minority of delinquent groups, and others which are simply repressed because they are, as he repeatedly puts it, "extravagant":

"A much more sensitive issue is that of the legal repression of cults which are simply extravagant and which, by themselves considered, do not tend to engender criminality; in such cases they would be acting within the law...From the standpoint of the secular and neutral mentality of modern society, if someone were to wear a tri-

corn hat in public, a normal thing in the time of Louis XV, or walk down the street wearing the shoes of a maharaja, how would he violate the current concepts of law? And if two or more persons were to put on unusual clothes and stroll through the streets singing nonsensical verses, would their action be censurable if their singing did not disturb the peace or violate good customs? By maintaining that the state should legislate on extravagant behavior such as this, the anticult movement raises many delicate and complex legal questions — all, note well, with implications in the moral and religious order...Under the pretext of preventing extravagance, the modern state would claim the right to form, define and impose an official opinion on almost every aspect of human life, along with the right to repress all those who did not live or think according to that official opinion." (pp. 8-9)

Obvious, of course...except that no movement against "extravagance" actually exists. No cult critic, for example, has ever complained that Scientologists wear tricorne hats. The complaint, whether justified or not, is that they take your money.

Like Introvigne in his critique on Jonestown, Plinio adds:

"Curiously, there are anticult organizations that have extended their attacks in every direction but that of socialism and communism. Why do they not consider them philosophical cults? Why do they not consider any of the aberrations of the hippie and rock movement extravagant (even though these movements are openly Satanic in many of their rituals)? Why? It is symptomatic that they frequently lash out against the enemies that communism seeks to overthrow. It is impossible not to conclude that, in the practical order, these anticult groups pave the way for communism and lead to global totalitarianism. Thus, these anticult organizations and socialism/communism appear to be complementary." (p. 10)

The false reasoning here will be obvious to anyone who has even the slightest knowledge of the so-called "anti-cult movements". In the first place, "socialism and communism", like fascism or the Catholic Church, do not fall within the rather strict criteria used to define a cult. Second, cult critics have always taken note of those Communist, Catholic or other movements that do fall within such criteria. This is the reason why certain Marxist-Leninist groups or Opus Dei, but not the Church or Communism in gener-

al, have been targeted (whether rightly or not is a completely different issue). The rock movement is of course not targeted simply because it is "extravagant", and can hardly be considered a "mind control cult".

Plinio then proceeds to discuss "brainwashing":

"In the United States, the term brainwashing has had a profound impact on public opinion. It was first used in 1950 by journalist Edward Hunter, Jr., in a series of articles for the *Miami Daily News* and the *Leader Magazine*, wherein he described the tortures to which Americans were subjected in the Korean War when they fell into enemy hands." (p. 11)

Put this way, it seems as if a journalist invented the word. Actually, "brainwashing" arose as a positive term in Communist China, *hse nao*, although it was introduced into the West by Edward Hunter in his book *Brainwashing in Red China*. However, already in 1956 — almost thirty years before Plinio penned these lines — Robert J. Lifton had introduced a new term, "thought reform" (also of Chinese origin), and by around 1980 the term "mind control" had come into common usage. Margaret Singer, one of the leading cult critics in the USA, introduced the rather clumsy expression, "systematic manipulation of psychological and social influence" in 1982 (see Margaret Thaler Singer, *Cults in Our Midst: The Hidden Menace in Our Everyday Lives*, [San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994]). Of course Plinio may well be forgiven for not knowing this; however, these facts are important since the "anti-cult movement" generally made a clear distinction between "brainwashing", that is the violent imposition of a change of opinion under conditions of physical duress, and methods of "thought reform" based on the systematic use of every possible psychological key for maintaining control over individuals, but without the use of physical constraint. Journalists of course continue to use the term "brainwashing", but "anti-cult movements" rarely do, or did back at the time Plinio wrote these passages. I do not intend here to take a stand on this complicated issue, but Plinio is clearly fighting a false enemy.

By attacking brainwashing, Plinio is attacking a straw man: brainwashing means physically coercive manipulation. Since there is little opportunity for Chinese-style physical coercion in modern Western cults, the entire theory of "brainwashing" is wrong. The problem with this is that any sensible cult critic would agree with him. Indeed, psychiatrist Louis Jolyon West is quoted favourably in the booklet as a critic of the

notion of "brainwashing". What the writer forgets to say is that West is certainly one of the leading critics of cult control. A rather different issue is whether social environments can be extremely persuasive; entirely apart from the whole issue of cults, any attempt at denial here is bound to be fruitless. An obvious, if extreme, example were human sacrifices among the Aztecs: whether the individual priest actually enjoyed driving in his obsidian knife, there exists little doubt that he was socially convinced that it was a highly moral thing to do, and indeed that not doing so would be a seriously immoral deed.

However, as we have seen, "brainwashing" (*lavado de cerebro*) was certainly an explicit accusation launched against one group: Plinio's own TFP. The real reason for Plinio's sudden interest in "brainwashing", "cults", and the "anti-cult movement" emerges, with an Introvignesque deviousness, only at the end of his foreword. After saying that the only solution for "extravagant behavior" is to bring the lost sheep back "into the fold of the Holy Catholic Church", he says:

"This ideal, for which we fight, provides yet another important reason why this study was prepared

and published. In union, not only the communists themselves, but also their 'useful innocents', the leftists of all shades and especially the 'Catholic leftists' classify many Catholic groups faithful to the traditional teachings of the Supreme Magisterium of the Church as 'cults'. Adding insult to injury, they accuse such Catholics of using 'brainwashing' on their proselytes. The object of this work is, then, to repulse this offensive and to disarm those who have launched it: the communists and their 'fellow travelers' and 'useful innocents.'" (pp. 12-13)

Plinio's real agenda could not be expressed more clearly.

The greater part of this booklet, as we have said, is devoted to quoting criticisms of

the notion of brainwashing, or at least of its relevance to present day cults. One quote is quite startling; however, before launching accusations of bad faith against the TFP writers, it should be remembered that this is probably merely a reprint of material collected by others. On page 18, the booklet includes a long quote from *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism* by Robert J. Lifton, which denounces the abuse of the term "brainwashing" in contexts other than that of physical constraint. What the collector of this material apparently did not know is that this critique was part of Lifton's proposal for using an entirely different terminology to describe non-violent manipulation, or that Lifton's suggestions provided the theoretical groundwork for the entire "anti-cult movement's" reflections on persuasion and (as the term later developed) mind control. Even Introvigne had to acknowledge this fact, without however betraying Doctor Plinio's orders: these conflicting demands have led him to speak of "second generation brainwashing theories".

Introvigne's Role in Plinio's War

on the "Anti- Cult Movement"

This booklet proves that TFP was already upholding the same

line of cult apology three years before they found a "sociologist" to create an organization for this purpose. In 1985, sexologist Introvigne was still attacking the "Jehovaist cult". In 1987, sociologist Introvigne published *Il reverendo Moon e la Chiesa dell'Unificazione* (Torino: Elle Di Ci), the first book in his war on the "anti-cult movement". After all, even a recent curriculum (in *Libertà religiosa, 'sette' e 'diritto di persecuzione'*, p. 150) admits that it was only "in the second half of the 1980's" that Introvigne became a specialist in "contemporary 'new religiosity'." May we suggest that Introvigne's sudden transformation around 1985 had a close relationship to this campaign by TFP?

There are several reasons for thinking that this was no coincidence. First of all,

Introvigne's switch-over was not individual: the same symbiotic relationship between AC and Introvigne existed before and after the switch-over. And the switch-over involved all of AC, which very clearly changed its policy on cults in the same radical manner. Secondly, Introvigne's writings can all be read as an extensive series of footnotes confirming the original thesis by "Doctor Plinio" on "cults and brainwashing". However much he may have written, none of his subsequent work shows the slightest deviation from these guidelines. Thirdly, in his more intimate writings in *Cristianità*, Introvigne quite clearly reveals the strategic nature of cult apology, presenting it as a necessary weapon in the struggle against the "Freudian and Marxist anti-cult movement" and to protect Opus Dei and other groups (TFP is only mentioned rarely) against "persecution". There is nothing unusual in TFP affiliates taking up the "Doctor's" instructions and applying them around the world.

Documents may of course be quoted out of context to design almost any scenario; however, I believe I have quoted the documents correctly, in

their context, and have not missed any important information to the contrary. Of course, publicly available documents are only the last, and the

least authentic, step in a long process: crucial decisions are never taken in magazines. However, the documents which are available seem to confirm a statement repeated by several former members of AC (who, by the way, were not "socialized" into any "anti-cult substructure"): that Massimo Introvigne decided to found CESNUR as the result of a trip he took to Brazil. Trips to Brazil, as the booklet *Tradizione Famiglia Proprietà: Associazione cattolica o setta millenarista?* shows, play a very important role in preserving the social cohesion of the organisation.

Not having been a member of TFP myself, I cannot say whether it is a cult. What is however obvious is that TFP has gone through the same experiences as groups like Scientology and the Moonies

have: problems with parents and relatives of members, and accusations of secrecy, duplicity, manipulation, being personality cults, and aggressive proselytism. And the reaction has been exactly the same: to put the blame on an imaginary "anti-cult movement" run by "psychiatrists". Presumably, TFP decided to pick on such an unlikely enemy, since attacking the Catholic Church would have dried up their source of idealistic young Catholics (before espousing Introvigne's theories, New Acropolis founder Jorge A. Livraga put the blame on Opus Dei and the Vatican's fear of the "giant of history", meaning the tiny organization NA); while attacking governments is, of course, an unwise policy anywhere. Once this ideological picture has been drawn, everything must be fitted into it.

Anybody who knows anything about cult monitoring organizations, knows that nearly all of them were founded in order to solve a problem: that of grieving parents and disoriented former cult members. In this sense, cult monitoring organizations closely resemble other self-help groups set up by people whose lives

have been destroyed. If such groups have any prejudices, these are typically parents' spontaneous prejudices — they are not ideological

in any way, and every cult monitoring movement includes people with the most diverse ideas, whose common problem is far more important to them. At least in Italy, a large majority of the members of what Introvigne calls "anti-cult movements" are practising Catholics, but ideological/theological issues are never discussed in any such movement I know of.

However, Introvigne tells us how we "must" approach cult monitoring organizations:

"One must always start out from the basic ideological reference framework of the anti-cult movement, born in a secular humanist (*laicista*) environment which is unable to stand any social phenomenon which seems to belie the thesis that the

fate of religion is to progressively lose its importance in a modern and post-modern world which basically does not need it anymore. It should be added that...the secular humanist ideology almost always (although exceptions do exist) goes along with liberal and left-wing political militancy, as opposed to the politically conservative militancy of the new evangelical and fundamentalist Protestantism, as well as of some new religious movements, especially the Unification Church of Reverend Sun Myung Moon, at least until recent years." (Introvigne in "L'Opus Dei e il movimento anti-sette", *Cristianità*, May 1994, pp. 6-7)

Note, however, that psychiatrists are not always enemies. In *Cristianità*, a certain Bruto Maria Bruti suggests psychiatric treatment as the solution for the "vice" of homosexuality, quoting about as many academic sources as Introvigne usually does, and speaks of such things as the third interstitial nucleus of the frontal hypothalamus ("Omossessualità: vizio o programmazione biologica?",

in *Cristianità*, July-August, 1995).

Some Odd Friends of Introvigne

TFP's

open-armed ecumenism takes on surprising aspects. According to the French journalist Serge Faubert ("Le vrai visage des sociétés secrètes", *L'Evenement du jeudi*, November 4-10, 1993, pp. 44 ff.), Introvigne was one of only fifteen founding members of a very secret Group of Thebes (Groupe de Thèbes) which used to meet at the headquarters of the French Grand Orient and was made up exclusively of leaders from various "Orders". The tiny group included quite an interesting variety of individuals:

- 1) Massimo Introvigne, who attended the very first meeting of this lodge, on June 3, 1990.
- 2) Rémi Boyer, a former Rosicrucian (AMORC) who had created Arc-en-ciel

["Rainbow"], a federation of occult and New Age groups (including Sri Chinmoy, the Grande Loge Indépendante des Rites Unis, the Institut pour une Synthèse Planétaire, the Ordre Chevaleresque de la Rose-Croix, the Spiritual University of Brahma Kumaris. The Groupe de Thèbes was Boyer's second creation, for a smaller, and presumably higher, group of "initiates".

- 3) Jean-Pierre Giudicelli, leader of the French section of the Order of Myriam, former Corsican nationalist and right-wing militant (in Ordre Nouveau and then Troisième Voie).
- 4) Gérard Kloppel, world Grand Master of the Order of Memphis and Misraim.
- 5) Jean-Marie Vergério, leader of the "Templars of Circe".

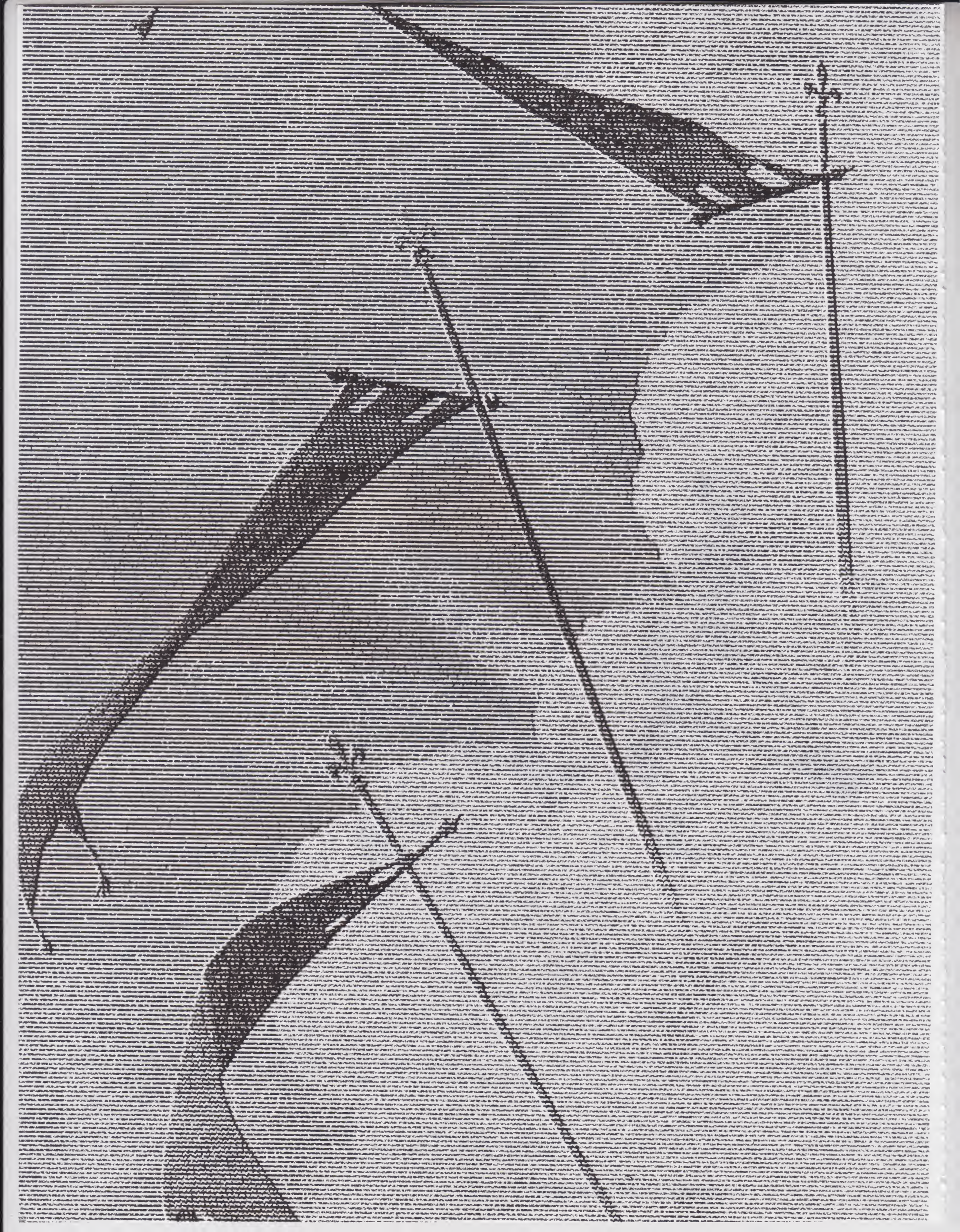
- 6) Kotzamanis, chancellor for Greece of a Templar group (it is not clear from Faubert's article whether

Triantaphyllos is his first name or the name of the group).

- 7) Christian Bouchet, the

most interesting member of the Group of Thebes (as a militant atheist, Bouchet prefers to be called by his surname only).

Bouchet was a prominent speaker at several CESNUR events: at the international CESNUR conference at Santa Barbara in 1991, and four times in France in 1992. This is rather amusing in the light of CESNUR's claim to represent "professionalism" and "serene discussion". I have no idea whether Bouchet has any professional qualification beyond being a follower of Aleister Crowley (he does call himself an "ethnologist", unlike "sociologist" Introvigne). Bouchet, who has been a militant in the French far right since the 70's, runs three separate magazines. For the general public, there is *Lutte*



du Peuple, "People's Struggle", a rather hysterical publication which many people might qualify as "neo-fascist"; then there is *Vouloir* ("Will"), a cultural publication largely devoted to studies on Nietzsche and Crowley; however, initiates have access to *Thélèma*, which means "Will" again, but in Greek: Thelema of course is Crowley's famous slogan. Bouchet was once a member of the Crowleyite OTO (Ordo Templi Orientis). However, the Treasurer General of Ordo Templi Orientis, Bill Heidrick, kindly advised us that Christian Bouchet was expelled from the O.T.O. in 1992 without having passed beyond the First Degree.

Bouchet's political and religious opinions are of no interest to me here; what does interest me is how a person like Bouchet can be fitted into the kind of "serene" and "professional discussion" CESNUR supposedly stands for. Here, for example, is a short review written by Bouchet: "The first CD of the indus [industrial music] group Dissonant Elephants, 'Our eyes like daggers', has a lot that appeals to us: ...the dust jacket shows the toad of Jerusalem on his cross with a red clown's nose." ("Vient de sortir", *Lutte du peuple*, September-October 1995, p. 13) The reference is to Aleister Crowley's notorious toad-crucifying ritual.

Bouchet appeared again in a conference on the "Roots and Evolution of Contemporary Paganism" in Lyon (February 3 and 4, 1996), where other speakers included Robert Amadou (a well-known Martinist); right-wing extremists Arnaud d'Apremont and Charles Antoni, and Rémi Boyer (again), as well as Renato del Ponte, an expert on Julius Evola. Massimo Introvigne, "director of CESNUR", was the star of the conference. The comments of a participant at this conference clearly show the kind of image Introvigne has succeeded in projecting on his work — instead of hiding his own ideological affiliation, he indicates that "although a Catholic", he is "forced" to objectively defend certain groups; at the same time, he is an academic expert:

"Introvigne is a Catholic, something which he has never hidden...his studies are of an exemplary objectivity and impartiality...Yet it may come as a surprise to see how Introvigne accepted an invitation to a conference which did not possess those requirements of 'scholarship' or 'seriousness' which he, as a scholar, must certainly appreciate. Introvigne himself realized how his presence could have caused some surprise...in his first speech, [he] explicitly said that accepting an invitation to a conference on neo-paganism where 'neo-pagans' were expected to speak, was 'not only a pleasure, but a

duty', since the [recent] report of the [French parliamentary] commission of investigation had described neo-paganism as socially dangerous since it was widespread among racist and anti-semitic right-wing circles." (Marco Pasi, "Esoterismo e nuova religiosità", in *Orion*, March-April 1996, pp. 51 ff.).

Of course, nothing is ever entirely bad: Introvigne's activities in defence of the large cult multinationals certainly help to make life easier for eccentric but innocent groups which have as much right to exist as any other and which are profoundly grateful to this "Catholic scholar"; some of the young witches who feel honoured by the presence of such a great figure are very decent people. However, the gratitude of these minor movements is certainly not what keeps CESNUR running, nor are these admirers aware of the fate that awaits them should TFP's millennialist imaginings come true one day.

The articles of association of the Group of Thebes seem to have excluded any non-initiates from membership. This of course is of no consequence to me; however, it does cast some doubt on Introvigne's right to call himself a Catholic, considering the Church's strict condemnation of freemasonry. Four members of this Lodge, besides Introvigne himself, took part in the CESNUR conference in Lyon in 1992. As usual, Introvigne avoided replying to these accusations; a reply was however written in a bulletin reserved for AC members only (*Domus Aurea Informazioni*, 5/10 September 1994, quoted in *Sodalitium*, n. 39, November 1994, pp. 20 ff.) which accidentally leaked out. Introvigne claimed that he had written over fifteen books and accused Faubert of being a "communist militant of a small Trotskyist group", but did not deny membership in the Lodge. He also claimed to have the right to be called a "sociologist", since "until 1993" (this sounds better than "in 1991 and in 1992", as stated in his curriculum in *Libertà religiosa*, 'sette' e 'diritto di persecuzione') he occasionally used to teach Sociology of Religion courses in a seminary in the provincial town of Foggia (the archbishop of which was at the time president of CESNUR). Introvigne admitted that the leakage of inside information about the Thebes Group caused "objective harm to the scholars participating in the meetings of the Group."

Introvigne was not always so friendly towards the French "Nouvelle Droite", from which Bouchet comes, perhaps because Doctor Plinio had not yet provided his own new guidelines. Basically, his thesis in the past (Massimo Introvigne, "GRECE e Nouvelle Ecole", in *Cristianità*, n. 32, Dec. 1977) was that the French "New Right" was

actually leftist. Under the subtitle, "A stand-by ruling class for the Revolution", we find the following description of these French "neo-pagans": "A 'cocktail' of evolutionism, neo-positivism, scientism, sexual revolution and clearly Masonic doctrines in an 'Indo-European' package: in the first place, in order to subtly corrupt those young people who escape from social-communist and progressive conformity, favouring their transformation into 'anonymous revolutionaries'; in the second place, in order to prepare the pollution of any anti-Communist reaction and to try to satisfy its inevitable spiritual needs in an anti-Catholic and anti-metaphysical sense, in view of a dark and fatal neo-pagan mirage." (p. 5)

Why CESNUR Dislikes Cult Critics

TFP has some very good reasons for disliking cult critics. Read the following statements by two critics to understand why Introvigne devotes so much time and effort to attacking what he calls "anti-cult movements". Both statements come from Spain, where TFP calls itself Covadonga, in remembrance of a Christian victory over the Muslims. Here is the first:

"The TFP cult, at least in Brazil, maintains a paramilitary structure of warrior-monks, called the 'sentinels of the West', who go through tough paramilitary training and wear a habit with a chain as a belt (they learn to use this as a weapon) and high military boots, they make vows of silence and regularly practice flagellation. This 'army' is made up of highly fanatical and violent young people". (Pepe Rodríguez, *El poder de las sectas* [Barcelona: Ediciones B, 1989], pp. 233, 245, 246)

And here is the second:

"Carlos Manuel Arbues is 22, the son of a widow, and his maternal grandfather was a Communist leader in the [Spanish] Republic. At home, I was always fed anti-militarism, atheism and non-conformity; this is why, when I was fifteen, I was fascinated by uniforms, medals and the like. We were four friends, bully boys, small leaders in our neighbourhood, where we liked to show off our strength. One day, a group of youths came into our street bearing standards and singing hymns and shouting loudly. They let us go with them. They were going to a demonstration, and were carrying chains and a lot of books and propaganda leaflets: yes, the rosary would save us, yes, Masonry and

Communism were corruption...we did not care what they believed, we were interested in the symbols of the organization and the fights they got into every day.

But, did not you realize you were getting into an entirely fascist organization?

At home they told me this. My mother left me without an allowance, and my other friends used to laugh at us, but all this only served to increase our appetite. We were enrolled and we began to attend the meetings.

For young people, Covadonga regularly stages study weeks and specialized anti-Communist training courses (SEFAC), consisting of lectures, study groups, theatrical performances, visits to historical monuments dating from the glorious epoch of Spain; mountain hiking and karate are practiced, and excursions and recreational camps are held. [This quote seems to come from an official Covadonga publication].

OK, but that is not so bad.

I have no idea exactly how true either of these stories is; even if they are, they probably leave out a good deal. Both these stories have all the limits of journalistic simplification. Of course, they are no worse than the kind of testimony *Cristianità* regularly used to publish about Communist or Palestinian "atrocities". However, one can well understand why Introvigne likes to explain away "apostates' narratives". The girl, one can imagine, lost her eye because Carlos Manuel Arbues was "socialized into an anti-cult sub-structure".

That Introvigne's theories about "apostates" have a purpose different from "sociology" behind them is not something I myself was the first to claim. It is something that Introvigne himself wrote, as directly as a lawyer can write, in a critique of Gordon Urquhart's book, *The Pope's Armada*, a critical but well-documented study of Opus Dei, Focolarini and Neocatechumenals, and of María del Carmen Tapia's reminiscences of her own life in Opus Dei. The article was of course written in *Cristianità*, which is so little read that Introvigne probably hoped to keep the secret inside the family.

Why should the testimony of "apostates"

Cristianità, n. 260, December 1996, p. 5)

Translated, this means that Introvigne's purpose is to "defend the Catholic faith seriously", and that in order to do so one must defend every controversial Catholic group. It is easy to detect here an implicit appeal for solidarity to all Catholic groups on behalf of TFP.

This means ruling out "uncritical acceptance of what 'ex-members' have to say" (our experience shows that Introvigne rules out any acceptance at all of their testimony), even if this means that "we shall no longer be able to use the same theories" for non-Catholic cults. By "quantitative criticism", "sociologist" Introvigne means sociological interpretations, which must be replaced entirely by the "religious criticism of doctrines": for example, by discussing thetans with Scientology's hard-sell staff or historical cycles with Moon's factory managers.

I do not wish to deny the value of conversions, but a theological discussion is not possible so long as there is no shared language and no shared values. One could imagine a discussion on the meaning of a Bible verse with a Jehovah's Witness, as such a verse would be

That is what it was like at the beginning, and we felt very manly, with our ranks and insignia, but after awhile we were no longer ourselves, we no longer thought about anything but what our leaders said, they kept us under their rule. Until finally, one day...

Go on, what happened?

They sent us to 'provoke' a Communist Party meeting at Casa de Campo, I won't go into details, because it disgusts me; I hit a girl in the eye with a chain, and I saw blood come out; my comrades struck people and laughed, and I ran away. When I got home, there was a dramatic scene: the girl was the daughter of a cousin of mine, and had lost her eye. I left them, but I also had to leave the neighbourhood and my family, and I am no longer myself. I hate them and am attracted by them at the same time. It is just like being hooked on drugs." (Pilar Salarrullana, *Las sectas* [Barcelona: Ediciones Temas de Hoy, 1990], pp. 98, 100)

be swept under the carpet? Introvigne is absolutely explicit:

"If we want to go to the heart of the matter, we must question the very premises of books like those by Gordon Urquhart [founder of the Focolarini movement in the U.K.] or María Carmen Tapia. Of course, there is a price to pay for this: once we have rejected uncritical acceptance of what 'ex-members' say, theories on 'brain-washing' and the quantitative definition of 'cult' for Focolarini, Opus Dei or Mother Teresa of Calcutta's sisters, we shall no longer be able to use the same theories even if we want to criticize the Jehovah's Witnesses or the followers of Reverend Moon. Maybe this is not too bad: even with these groups, years of experience have shown that quantitative, non-religious criticism is a waste of time, whereas it is only when we take the doctrines of the new religious movements seriously and criticize them on a religious level, that we can defend the Catholic faith seriously." (Massimo Introvigne, "'Sette cattoliche': l'equivoco continua", in

acceptable as a foundation for both parties, but there is no foundation for discussion when there is no shared starting point. It is only the human and not the cultural element which a priest and the follower of an esoteric group, for example, have in common. So the common ground is not theological, but lies in understanding the person standing in front of us, his dependencies, and what ties him to his group from a human (and hence sociological and psychological) point of view. A theological dialogue can only start afterwards, when the individual becomes aware that he can make his own choices.

Massimo Introvigne, as his CESNUR/AC colleague Ermanno Pavesi (a psychiatrist, by the way) points out in a 14-page article in *Cristianità*, offers this way of distinguishing groups:

"A doctrinal typology which distinguishes various waves of new religions, according to their relationship with the Catholic view of the world and with its characteristic elements: the Church, the unique role of Jesus Christ, God, the religious feeling as a specific way of relating

with the sacred.” (Ermanno Pavesi, “La psichiatria e i movimenti anti-sette”, *Cristianità*, March 1997, p. 13, quoting from M. Introvigne, “Autoguarigione e autoreddenzione,” in *Salute e salvezza: prospettive interdisciplinari*, edited by Ermanno Pavesi [San Giuliano Milanese: Di Giovanni, 1994], p. 66; it is worth noting that this whole issue of *Cristianità* contains only one other article)

This is an approach that would be entirely legitimate for a Catholic priest, but which has no relationship whatsoever to sociology. Introvigne’s repudiation of sociological approaches likewise skillfully moves Opus Dei and similar organizations (meaning, above all, TFP) out of the spotlight: since their doctrines are more or less Catholic, any Brazilian farmer who finds himself at odds with TFP should therefore limit himself to discussing the Trinity! While I do not intend to express any opinion about Opus Dei or other such organizations, it is quite clear that such a “theology-only” or “doctrine-only” stance will win TFP quite a few powerful friends among a variety of groups confronted by similar problems.

Sources

Very little critical material exists on TFP, and we would be glad for any suggestions. Only a few articles come from where criticism would be most likely: the political Left. An internet page in Portuguese by the “landless” movement, some critical material from Spain and an excellent but sectorial study by a professor at Durban University in South Africa (where, under the apartheid regime, TFP “celebrated religious freedom”, as Introvigne would put it, by having the progressive Catholic review *New Nation* outlawed), are all that a quick search through the Web could locate. There have also been a few interesting articles in the French press.

The best sources we know of are two booklets published by Catholic traditionalists:

1) *Tradizione, famiglia, proprietà: associazione cattolica o setta millenarista?* (1996).

2) Carlo Alberto Agnoli & Paolo Taufer, *TFP: la maschera e il volto*.

Both are available only from Priorato Madonna di Loreto, via Mavoncello 25, 47828 Spadarolo di Rimini, Italy, tel./fax 0541-727767 — 728335. The first booklet is a very interesting analysis of the organization and includes the testimonies of several former TFP members. The second is heavily conditioned by the authors’ conspiracy theories, with which I personally disagree. However, the booklet contains many interesting quotes from TFP material.

Several very well-documented articles were published in the traditionalist Catholic review *Sodalitium*, as a reaction against Introvigne’s locating these ultra-orthodox Thomists, in an article on “new religious movements”, somewhere between the Moonies and the Satanists. Introvigne had the bad taste of doing so in an article in the Italian Masonic publication, *Ars Regia*, published by the “brother” Mauro Mugnai. (*Sodalitium* n. 35, October-November 1993; a review in which Introvigne’s name figures as “scientific consultant” for the publishers)

Other interesting material came out in a debate in *Orion*, an Italian magazine generally labelled as “right-wing”, where both pro- and anti-TFP voices can be heard

(*Orion*, c/o Libreria del Fantastico, via Plinio 32, 20129 Milano, Italy).

However, the most interesting material on TFP comes from the horse’s own mouth:

Roberto de Mattei, *Il crociato del secolo XX: Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira* (Casale Monferrato: PIEMME, 1996), a book which I believe has been translated into several languages).

This biography of the Leader proudly boasts about what most people would consider the most disreputable aspects of TFP: the photographs in this book are alone enough to put Introvigne out of business. A look at the footnotes will show that de Mattei, besides being the leader of AC’s sister organization, the Centro Lepanto, is also a great Introvigne-quoter. And the quotes he cites go directly to the point: they all defend Master Plinio.

Another important source reflecting TFP’s views is a website called “SOS fazendeiros”, where a coalition of landowners — “faithful to the mission of defending Tradition, Family and Property and to the thinking of their

eminent founder, Professor Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira” — calls for the suppression of the farmers’ movements in Brazil (<http://www.sos-fazendeiro.org.br/>).

Notes about the articles published here

Anybody can understand that the most interesting criticism against Introvigne and Alleanza Cattolica can only come from those who know them well: Catholic traditionalists and other elements of the so-called radical right. This is why I quote from the magazines *Sodalitium* and *Orion*. These publications do not even deal with “new religious movements”, and therefore cannot reasonably be considered supporters or followers of the “anti-cult movement”.

Besides darkly suggesting that I might be a secret agent for the Belgian Parliament, almost the only defence Introvigne has employed so far against my critique of his work is to make use of the fact that right-wing magazines criticise him in order to claim that he himself is not a right-wing extremist. However, the real reason why certain elements on the far right criticize him is

quite different: the more orthodox Catholic traditionalists have many reasons to oppose a movement which they consider millennialist and to some extent esoteric, whereas the more secular and pagan components of the radical right understandably object when a “reactionary” Christian group like Alleanza Cattolica attempts to influence and colonize their milieu.

Therefore, *Sodalitium* and *Orion* know well — thanks to a partial affinity of interests — the ideological background to which CESNUR’s members belong: the group Alleanza Cattolica, whose activists can be also found among many representatives and members of the Center for the Study of New Religions managed by Massimo Introvigne (the Italian leader of AC and founder of CESNUR); and the right-wing organization TFP, originating from the “counter-revolutionary teachings” of Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira and highly esteemed by Alleanza Cattolica. Consequently, we deemed it appropriate to utilize and cite *Sodalitium* and *Orion* on the basis of their competence in these matters. This choice had nothing whatsoever to do with the ideological approach of *Sodalitium*

and *Orion*, which we consider irrelevant to the issues we are discussing; here, we are much more interested in the facts than in the ideas upheld by the publications which originally housed these articles.

Sodalitium [1], the official organ of the Institute Mater Boni Consilii, is run by Catholic traditionalists who can boast a direct and personal knowledge of AC and its activists. This journal, whose editor is Don Francesco Ricossa, is printed in Turin and distributed free of charge to anybody making a request. *Sodalitium's* editorial staff has been writing about Alleanza Cattolica — and particularly Massimo Introvigne — since 1993 [2]).

Orion [3], on the contrary, is dedicated to politics and not to religion. It is a “third position” neo-fascist group influenced by the so-called “anti-globalist front”, and it has shown a certain open-mindedness by skillfully hosting contributions of a diverse nature. Right-wing groups are often subject to strong criticism by *Orion's* contributors, as can be seen in the article on TFP and its connections with Alleanza Cattolica.

Finally, in the way we have shown above, we tried to focus on CESNUR from different point of views in order not to limit our field to the perspective offered by the scholars who explicitly analyse the question of “new religious movements”.

Notes:

[1] *Sodalitium*, periodical. Loc. Carbignano, 36. 10020 Verrua Savoia (Turin). Telephone: 0161/839335; Fax: 0161/839334.

[2] *Sodalitium* has published 6 articles: “Massimo Introvigne e la Massoneria” (n. 35, pp. 13-18); “Introvigne: dalle messe nere alla Gran Loggia” (n. 38, pp. 44-47); “La ‘smentita’ di Massimo Introvigne” (n. 39, pp. 20-28); “Tra esoterismo e devozione, ovvero: relazioni pericolose di alcuni devoti...” (n. 42, pp. 65-68); “Tra esoterismo e devozione. Le relazioni pericolose continuano...” (n. 43, pp. 46-52); and “Alleanza...Massonica?” (n. 46, p. 64-76).

[3] *Orion*, magazine, Edizioni Barbarossa, Società Editrice Barbarossa, C.P. 136, 20095 Cusano Milanino (Milan)

Miguel Martinez was born in Mexico but grew up in Italy. At the age of 20, he joined a political-esoteric cult known as New Acropolis, becoming one of its leaders. He established several branches of this organisation in Italy (Siracusa, Piacenza, Milan), and was then appointed “National Commander” of the organisation for Egypt. He left the group in 1990, and then obtained a degree in Oriental Languages and Literature (Arabic and Farsi) from the University of Venice fol-

lowing the completion of a thesis comparing the pre-millennial dispensationalist approach to the holy places of Jerusalem with that of radical Islamism. He has written for several publications dealing with social, political and religious issues. Texts of his, currently awaiting publication, deal with the revisions and applications of the thinking of Helena P. Blavatski; with so-called “Christian Zionism”; and with the relations between “cultural memory”, politics and power in the Western approach to the Near East. For the full text of the manuscript published above, and for much more information on CESNUR, see his CESNUR “critical page” website:

www.kelebekler.com/cesnur

“Introvigne, Science and Ideology”

by Alessia Guidi

The website of the Rome branch of the Catholic cult resource GRIS recently published an interesting interview on the Swiss radio with two well-known scholars who deal with issues related to New Religious Movements (NRMs): Dr Raffaella di Marzio and Massimo Introvigne, director of the Turin-based CESNUR (Centre for the Study of New Religions).[1] I carefully read what the latter said, and compared it with what I found in a booklet I had just discovered, called *La questione della nuova religiosità*, by Massimo Introvigne, published by *Cristianità* in 1993 (ISBN 88-85236-14-6). This made for some very interesting reflections on the actions and statements of CESNUR's director.

First, let us look at what he told the Swiss Radio:

“Question: Professor Introvigne, before answering criticisms, would you like to tell us what the premises of your research are?

Massimo Introvigne: Social science scholars speak of an approach which is independent from the personal values of the researcher, and attempts to describe a situation without basing oneself on the doctrinal position of the scholar. For example, I am Catholic and I could say that a movement is far from the Catholic faith. However, this is a task which I gladly leave to the theologians. In the same way, a person with ideological positions, for example a secular humanist [laicista], could not say that the worldview of a movement that is opposed to the secular and rationalist view which he believes in should be promoted. I think these two kinds of approaches — in social sciences

they are called ‘religionist’ and ‘ideological’, respectively — have a legitimate field of application in polemical writings, but are not part of science.”

Mark his words well.

Why do I say this? Because in chapter 4 (pages 44 ff.) in the 1993 booklet mentioned above, a certain Massimo Introvigne, whom I imagine to be the same person who was speaking on the Swiss Radio, wrote:

“Alleanza Cattolica was certainly one of the first Catholic groups in Italy to become aware of the problem [of new religiosity]. It spent many years making every effort, in Italy and abroad, to promote action on all three levels [- the scientific, the pastoral, and the informational -] while at the same time trying to avoid any confusion between such levels [2]. This is why militants of Alleanza Cattolica, together with others, founded and still inspire CESNUR, the Centre for the Study of New Religions [3], which has by now achieved recognition as one of the main international centres for scientific study of new religiosity. And this too is why militants of Alleanza Cattolica are engaged, wherever possible, in Catholic groups involved in study, information, and pastoral action, on a diocesan and national scale; in some quite important dioceses, they are the main animators. Finally, this is why Alleanza Cattolica — under its own name and responsibility — has been promoting hundreds of meetings, seminars and lectures over more than ten years, in order to explain the basic issues of new religious movements in general — and in detail as well, as in the case of the Jehovah's Witnesses — within the framework of an apologetic response, which always goes back to the wider framework of the dramatic struggle between evangelization and anti-evangelization. In other words, to use the language of the counter-revolutionary school of Catholicism which is the special inspiration for Alleanza Cattolica, the struggle between Revolution and Counter-Revolution (note 35: For the main ideas of this school, see PLINIO CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, *Rivoluzione e Contro-Rivoluzione*, 3rd enlarged Italian edition [Piacenza: Cristianità, 1977]); the expression of this scenario is one of the main purposes of the association. For several centuries, the overall outline of this scenario has tended to remain the same; however, Alleanza Cattolica tries to follow the modifications of its most specific and concrete aspects through history, focusing its attention from time to time on what appear to be the most serious aspects of anti-evangelization and of the revolution-

ary process. It should not come as a surprise if — as the action of new religious movements increases in intensity and importance, both in terms of quantity and quality within the general framework of obstacles to evangelization — Alleanza Cattolica has increasingly focused its attention on this aspect of the revolutionary process, without forgetting others which are no less worrisome. The tradition of thought that Alleanza Cattolica is based on has always taught that the authentic counter-revolutionary militant is the person who is able to focus on today's Revolution without wasting time fighting yesterday's Revolution — almost as if one felt a paradoxical "affection" for the latter, aware of the fact that the Revolution changes all the time. Having identified a crucial aspect of today's Revolution in the new religious movements of today, Alleanza Cattolica does not limit itself to analyzing this or that scholar, but draws its inspiration — first and foremost — from the indications of the Magisterium of the Church."

Is Introvigne actually telling us that CESNUR was created by militants of Alleanza Cattolica in order to fight the dramatic conflict "between evangelization and anti-evangelization", hence "to use the language of the counter-revolutionary school of Catholicism which is the special inspiration for Alleanza Cattolica, the struggle between Revolution and Counter-Revolution"? And that a militant is a person who "is able to focus on today's Revolution without wasting time fighting yesterday's Revolution"? Yes, that seems to be exactly what he is saying. Basically, the action of CESNUR Italy seems to be the ideological expression of the counter-revolutionary school of the inspiring father figure of the movement of which Introvigne is a leader, i.e. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, founder of TFP, Tradition, Family and Property [3]. And what is "today's revolution"? Does it have something to do with the secular ideas which arose from "yesterday's revolution"?

In the same booklet, Introvigne also tells us some other interesting things:

"b. Man [who is] in some way "religious" or looking for contact with the sacred — however deviant or even perverse — in the world of new religiosity is not identical with the man who is a victim or promoter of the anti-religious ideologies which the Church had — and, in some parts of the world, still has — as its adversary, and cannot simply be treated in the same way. His "religious" aspiration may contain authentic elements which merit

respect, "seeds of the Word" which — while avoiding any kind of syncretism or relativism — must be helped to mature through dialogue."

Basically, Introvigne is saying that he believes that a person who claims to be "religious", no matter whether he follows a "perverse" or "deviant" group (or, I would add, a group which considers money to be its god, or a group of murderers such as those who recently committed massacres in Uganda), has within himself the "seeds of the Word", that is, the word of God, and must be respected as an individual sensitive to being evangelized. On the contrary, a person who is a "victim or promoter" of "anti-religious ideologies" — which Introvigne elsewhere basically identifies with French secularism, ideas he associates with the "anti-cult movements" — has no hope whatsoever, and cannot be treated in the same way.

So who are the main enemies of evangelization that the good militant must fight against in his Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira-inspired counter-revolution? Certainly not those who have inside them the "seed of the Word", like the Scientologists, the subway gassers in Japan, or the slaughterers of innocent Uganda farmers. No, they are alright. Sooner or later — I suppose the good Alleanza Cattolica/CESNUR militant thinks — we shall evangelize and convert them. Better a RELIGIOUS fanatic than a reasoning NON-BELIEVER, this seems to be Introvigne's idea. The real enemies are the secularists, especially the "anti-cultists", who — according to the CESNUR director, seem basically to be driven by religious intolerance and hatred for religion, and who appear on the website of the Milan diocese as "devils", no less. Of course, anybody who has read Introvigne will have noticed how, and wondered why, he carries out his private war against the "anti-cult movement" everywhere. I think what he wrote in 1993 shows that what Introvigne is conducting is actually a Holy War, one which is basically motivated by his counter-revolutionary ideology.

Now let us go back to his radio interview: "I believe that both these approaches — religionist and ideological, as they are respectively called in social sciences — have a legitimate field of application in the works of polemicists but are not part of science." In brief, Massimo Introvigne is saying that Massimo Introvigne is a polemicist who is not part of science.

Considering what Introvigne said in his 1993 booklet, his answer to the definitive question by the Swiss journalist looks a little "embarrassing":

"CS: Several documents claim that CESNUR is associated with the Catholic traditionalist movement Alleanza Cattolica, which supports cults, not for scientific reasons, but because it fears that the battle against alternative movements could not only overwhelm these religions, but also controversial movements within the Catholic Church associated with Alleanza Cattolica. What is your opinion?

MI: Alleanza Cattolica is a Catholic movement which is recognized in many of the dioceses where it is active. I belong to it. Some of the other hundreds, indeed by now thousands, of scholars who have taken part in CESNUR initiatives, also belong to it. I am the only member of the Board of Directors of CESNUR International who belongs to Alleanza Cattolica. There are three Catholics. The others are Orthodox Christians, Methodists, Calvinists, or simply atheists. So it seems to me ridiculous to present CESNUR as an institution associated with a Catholic movement."

Now that is strange — wasn't it Introvigne himself who in 1993 claimed that CESNUR was created by "militants of Alleanza Cattolica" to join the fight in the "dramatic struggle" between "evangelization and anti-evangelization"? The only questions are 1) how many of the "hundreds, indeed by now thousands" of scholars who took part in CESNUR's initiatives were aware that they were carrying out Introvigne's ideological Holy War, and 2) whether the members of the board of directors are aware of this. In any case, Introvigne clearly does not answer the question, but changes the subject.

Notes:

1. The interview was then published in full by *Corriere del Ticino*, and subsequently appeared on the website of GRIS Roma.

2. In this same booklet, Introvigne describes these three levels as follows:

"f. An analysis of this phenomenon and its causes must also be the point of departure for properly identifying the actors of pastoral efforts so much needed in this field, without confusing three different levels, which must absolutely not act against each other, but must be harmoniously coordinated:

- the level of scientific study of the phenomenon, where knowledge is still scarce and the number of scholars is not large enough considering the size of the phenomenon; so much so that only

co-operation among Catholic and non-Catholic scholars, bringing together every available scientific and academic skill, can make it possible to make maps which are as accurate as possible in a field where the lack of cartography is one of the first reasons it is difficult to move;

- the level of pastoral intervention into the phenomenon, both by the dissemination of essential information and by concrete help to people with problems: on this level, scientific description will not be enough. Elements of judgement will have to be introduced, in other words actual apologetics; unlike on the first level, co-operation with non-Catholics here must be done only with great caution.

- the level of reflection and hence of dissemination of analyses and hypotheses concerning the role that the phenomenon of new religious movements plays within the wider framework of the obstacles opposing the evangelizing mission of the Church, and of the struggle between the Church and the forces which for various reasons oppose its project of evangelization."

3. Quite curious. On the CESNUR web page <http://www.cesnur.org/about.htm>, but only in the part in English, we read that CESNUR "was established in 1988 by a group of religious scholars from leading universities in Europe and the Americas." So who really founded CESNUR: militants of Alleanza Cattolica or scholars? OR were these scholars themselves militants of Alleanza Cattolica, contradicting what Introvigne told Swiss radio when he said that it seemed "ridiculous to present CESNUR as an institution associated with a Catholic movement"? I think that the scholars who are board members of CESNUR should ask themselves the same question, unless they want to be associated with Alleanza Cattolica.

For further information on CESNUR and all sorts of interesting topics related to NRMs, please see Guidi's "Alessia Website" at: <http://members.xoom.it/xemu>

"The True Face of the Secret Societies: Inquest into the Mysterious Group of Thebes"

by Serge Faubert

from *L'Événement du Jeudi* (4 November 1993), pp. 44-52

Paris, a weekend last May. The few masons present in the locale of the Grand Orient de France (GOF) barely paid attention to the 30 or so people who hurried, early in the morning, toward one of the meeting rooms. The faces passing through the hall were not familiar to them,

but then one cannot know all of the "brothers". In any case, the small group had presented an official authorization form to the custodian bearing the signature of a high-ranking member of the obedience. So why worry about it?

However, there were some who were worried. None of the visitors belonged to the Grande Orient. They were non-masons [*des profanes*]. And what a group of outsiders! Several old veterans of the extreme right, a former Red Brigadist, a respectable Italian university professor closely linked, at the same time, to the Vatican and to French [Catholic] integralists, a leader of a non-governmental organization and activist concerned with children, a Belgian intellectual close to the national-Bolsheviks (the "red-brown" Russians), a sympathizer of Holocaust denier Professor [Robert] Faurisson... And yet the members of the Grande Orient had had a narrow escape. The leader of an extreme right national-Bolshevik organization, due to his sensitivity toward the group, had not come. In contrast to the preceding year in which, during the course of a meeting also held in the Grande Orient, he had made a brilliant presentation on...sexual magic.

Yes, this odd tribunal occupied itself with magic as well. It was its very reason for existence. Its name? The Group of Thebes... [in this context Thebes is a reference to] the capital of the empire of the [ancient Egyptian] Pharaohs... who, to believers in the esoteric tradition, held the secrets of the universe...

A secret society besides, it is said. But the Group of Thebes is not a school of mystery like the others. The originality of this organization is that it gathers together the leaders of occultist groups or personages recognized in the small world of the initiates. A college of chiefs of some sort, whose existence is even more secret than that of the societies they direct...

The linchpin of the group is Rémi Boyer... [An employee of a Swiss non-governmental organization in his thirties who was obsessed with occultism from an early age,] Boyer decided to work toward federating the small world of esotericism... [After holding a couple of meetings and attempting to organize a federation of esoteric grouplets, including New Age cults and chivalric orders, under the rubric Arc-en-ciel (Rainbow), he changed his approach and tried to organize] "another type of structure which, this time, brought together individuals. He worked on this with one of his close associates, Jean-Pierre Giudicelli, the second pillar of the Group of Thebes.

Giudicelli had authority in esoteric circles... He headed the French section of

Myriam, a Luciferian obedience whose teachings made an appeal to the sexual impulses of its adepts... This Corsican was well over forty, a sympathizer of the pro-independence FLNC [Front de Liberation National Corse], and also still a fascist: a former member of Ordre Nouveau, he took part in the neo-fascist group Troisième Voie until the end the 1980s, and was conspicuous among the advisors of the Front National in Nice after the legislative elections of 1986... [This is in contrast to the politics of Boyer, who is an active supporter of liberal human rights organizations. Boyer defended his collaboration with Giudicelli by insisting that] "that which brings us together is more important than that which divides us"... In short, magic is above politics.

[The three objectives of the Group of Thebes, as set down by Boyer and Giudicelli, were to] "preserve the authentic traditional paths", "verify the effectiveness of initiatic techniques", [and] "intervene in the esoteric scene"... it was a matter of warding off the fanatics of every shade and other disciples in search of gurus. The Group of Thebes wanted to be a club of serious people anchored in tradition and orthodoxy. The Khmer Rouge of alchemy. In order to work in peace, the most absolute secrecy had to be observed: "the group will not function according to the work modalities typical of the profane world (no declared statutes, no bank account opened in its name, no direct interventions)..." Alongside of it a second structure was created: the Circle of Alexandria. An antechamber of the Group of Thebes, it was intended to welcome the candidates and the guests. However, "the Circle of Alexandria's associate members and guests will remain unaware of the name Group of Thebes."

On 3 June 1990, in Paris, the foundation meeting [of the Group of Thebes] was held. Fifteen or so participants attended this first conclave. Among them, a heavyweight: the Italian Massimo Introvigne. This Turinese university professor is the author of a book on magical movements... and director of the Center for the Study of New Religions (CESNUR), an observation post presided over by the Archbishop of Foggia, Monsignor [Giuseppe] Casale. In effect Introvigne is one of the principal leaders of Alleanza Cattolica, a traditionalist community which, while it has remained very close to the Vatican, has long maintained friendly relations with Monsignor Lefebvre.

[Among the respectable participants] were Gérard Kloppel, international grand master of Memphis Misraim lodge, a masonic obedience that claims 7000 members — 1000 in France — who arrived with his wife. The Templars of Circe sent their number two

man, Jean-Marie Vergério. This would be his only appearance, since upon further reflection the Circe Templars preferred to pursue their path separately. With one exception: the chancellor in Greece of the Templar obedience Triantaphyllos, Kotzamanis.

But alongside these honorable erudites or initiates, several less recommendable persons appeared. Like Georges Magne de Cressac — one of the loyalists of Giudicelli, the co-founder of the Group of Thebes — who had participated in the organization of a Robert Faurrison meeting in Limoges on 10 September 1987. Or the Belgian Jean-Marie D'Asembourg. One turns up his name in the patronage committee of the Russian politico-esoteric journal *Milii Angel*. Who is the editor and patron of this journal? Alexander Dugin, the number two man in the Russian National-Bolshevik Front.

However, these two rascals are only small fry [*démi-soldes*] compared to the most controversial figure of the Group of Thebes, Christian Bouchet. A former leader of the *Comités d'Action Republicaines* — a satellite organization of the RPR [Jacques Chirac's neo-Gaullist *Rassemblement pour la République*] — this Nantes native rejoined Alain de Benoist's GRECE at the beginning of the 1980s, then the extreme right group *Troisième Voie*, headed by Jean-Gilles Malliarakis. A formation which, in spite of its small number of adherents, was always distinguished by its activism and by a discourse which was both anti-American and anti-Soviet. In July 1991, the organization broke apart. Bouchet quit *Troisième Voie* and brought a group of militants along with him.

Several weeks later he founded *Nouvelle Résistance* (NR), a national-Bolshevik organization. His principal adversary: the United States, the incarnation of the capitalist system, which he accused of destroying the identity of peoples. All those who resisted American power and industrial society could thus become potential allies. A profession of faith which has led NR, in addition to its ongoing campaigns against Euro-Disney and McDonald's, to infiltrate [groups of] young ecologists (see *L'Événement du Jeudi* #428) and the Committee for Lifting the Embargo Against Iraq (see *ibid* #463). On the international level, the organization is linked to the Russian National-Bolshevik Front — Bouchet has personally gone to Moscow several times — but also to a myriad of small European "red-brown" groups who have joined together in the European Liberation Front.

How did Bouchet find himself integrated into the Group of Thebes? Quite simply, this history student is one of the most knowledgeable experts on, and biographers of, Aleister Crowley, one of the Popes of esotericism. It is to [Crowley] that he devoted

his master's thesis, which has since been published. An exegete of Crowley, Bouchet is likewise his disciple. He is a member of the *Ordo Templi Orientis* (OTO), the obedience founded by the English magician. A group which, by its own admission, has never exceeded fifteen members in France.

Giudicelli, Georges Magne de Cressac, Jean-Marie d'Asembourg, Christian Bouchet...[Perhaps someone will now become alarmed enough to protest.] Professor Massimo Introvigne, for example. But no, the theologian isn't troubled. "One is aware of encountering extremists in that milieu," he explains. "Esotericism demands an absolute commitment, something which is rarely made by politically lukewarm people. Besides, you know," continues the scholar, "I am above all a researcher. For me the Group of Thebes is a marvellous terrain for study." [As for Gérard Kloppel, he is] delighted to count "high-ranking policemen" among the leaders of Memphis Misraim. Certain sources inside the Group of Thebes likewise took account of the presence of a DST [the French equivalent of the FBI] official among the leaders of Memphis Misraim. Without, however, being able to determine if he was or was not on an infiltration mission...

It is therefore not surprising that as the months passed other political fanatics joined the Group of Thebes. Thierry Roche, for example, president in 1988 of the Kemit association, a satellite of GRECE. Or even Paolo Fogagnolo, a former member of the Milanese column of the Red Brigades. After he was incarcerated, the Sefira — the equivalent of the Virgin in the esoteric tradition — appeared before him. It's also true that during this period the revolutionary was observing a prolonged hunger strike...Today the animator of Radio Popolare, the station of the Milanese branch of *Rifondazione Comunista*, Fogagnolo heads the *Fraternità Rosa Croce Dorè ed Antica* and its profane branch, the political-philosophical group *Prometeo*. Its purposes: "...to sensitize the masses to the fact that revolutionary communism should be wedded to spiritual sacredness, like Christianity at its origins...to practice alchemy in its diverse aspects...to make a revolution." A vast program.

For its part, the Group of Thebes wishes to be more traditionalist. There one is above all in favor of magic. The "operating groups", i.e., the workshops, multiply. On the menu, "Incantations and Words of Power", "Spiritual Hierarchies", "Angels and Demons", "Magic Wands", "The Dangers of Practical Magic"...Another satellite organization is created: the *Centre International de Recherches et d'Études Martinistes* (CIREM), charged with diffusing those communica-

tions of the group that are accessible to the profane. Its journal, *L'Esprit des Choses*, nevertheless contains some surprises. In issue #4-5, dated Spring 1993, one can find an article entitled "Pensées sur le Christ et le christianisme" which is written by Sri Chinmoy, a guru who flatters himself, among other things, for having written 843 poems in 24 hours, painted 140,000 pictures since birth, and composed 6000 musical pieces...

One also finds the extreme right leader [Bouchet, who appeared at a 1992 CESNUR conference in Paris] at the head of an internal commission called *Tradition et Politis*. Its object: to study the "different models of society which have been proposed by initiatory societies since Antiquity." A workshop whose sessions must have been very animated, since the second coordinator of the group was none other than Paolo Fogagnolo, the former Red Brigadist.

[Roughly translated from the French by Jeff Bale]

Introvigne: From the Black Mass to the Grand Lodge

by "Father Torquemada"

from *Sodalitium* 38, pp. 44-47

Introduction

In issue #35 of *Sodalitium* (October-November 1993), I published an article entitled "Massimo Introvigne and Freemasonry". In it, I displayed my own amazement and uneasiness after verifying that the writer, a well-known leader of *Alleanza Cattolica*, collaborator of the daily newspaper of the Italian bishops *Avvenire*, and director of CESNUR (the *Centro Studi sulle Nuove Religioni*), as well as a former collaborator of GRIS (the [anti-cult] *Gruppo di Ricerca e di Informazioni sulle Sette*), was also in reality a member of the scientific consulting committee of the quasi-Masonic journal *Ars Regia*. In fact, in spite of the [Catholic Church's] conciliar opening vis-à-vis Freemasonry, and the passage of Introvigne from Lefebvrist traditionalism to acceptance of Vatican II, it is always rather striking to see a noted Catholic, at one time a fierce opponent of the lodges, collaborate with Masonry. My amazement was such that, notwithstanding the continual attacks of Massimo Introvigne on the *Istituto Mater Boni Consilii* [publisher of *Sodalitium*], listed by him as being among the current cults, I did not want to believe with my own eyes,

and refused to credit an affiliation between our hero and Freemasonry. Unfortunately, the hero in question did everything in his power to make me believe it again... [here follows a section concerning Introvigne's regular presence, allegedly as a "participant observer", at Satanist black masses, both in Italy and the US, a fact confirmed by Introvigne himself in an interview with Maria Grazia Cutuli ("Il diavolo è fra noi," *Epoca*, 28 September 1993).]

The Group of Thebes

Sincerely, in spite of the *Epoca* article, I wouldn't have written this new article on Introvigne if I hadn't been mailed a photocopied article from the French newsweekly *L'Événement du Jeudi* (4 November 1993, pp. 44-53), entitled "Le vrai visage des sociétés secrètes" and written by Serge Faubert. It concerned an "investigation of the mysterious Group of Thebes." Group of Thebes? What is the Group of Thebes? Ask the sectologist Massimo Introvigne...

[Here follows the above cited passage concerning the Thebes Group members meeting in the Grand Orient de France]

Permit me to leave the responsibility for what he wrote to Serge Faubert (a well-known leftist), but have you recognized, dear reader, the Italian personage who strolled through the halls of the headquarters of French Masonry? Perhaps the unwarranted title of university professor deceives you, but doesn't the interest in sexual magic signify anything? Yes, it's him again!

"Among them — Faubert writes — was a bigshot: the Italian Massimo Introvigne. This Turin university professor is the author of a work on magical movements (*Il Capello del mago*, partially translated into French as *La Magie*) which serves as a model. Moreover, the director of CESNUR, an organization presided over by the Archbishop of Foggia, Monsignor Casale. In effect Introvigne is one of the key leaders of Alleanza Cattolica, a traditionalist group that, despite being very close to the Vatican, has long maintained friendly relations with Monsignor Lefebvre." (p. 47)

What is our hero doing in the Group of Thebes?

To this question, he replied: "...I am above all a scholar, and the Group of Thebes is for me a marvelous terrain of study." I don't doubt it. In the lodge as in the Satanist

church, Introvigne is above all a scholar, and not an affiliate. And yet...with the lodge as with the Satanist church, there is something that doesn't fit. Not only does the Group of Thebes habitually meet at the Grand Orient de France, but it also qualifies as a secret association about which we have learned only because of an internal disagreement. (cf. p. 51): "Since the group places itself at the service of the most pure tradition — notes an internal document reproduced by Faubert on p. 47 — membership in the group should not appear as a testimonial for an organization or an individual, regardless of who it is." This implies:

- 1) the maximum discretion about the existence of the Group and of its works. It is through its capacity to work in secret that the Group will obtain the efficiency it desires.
- 2) the Group will not function with the work modality typical of the "profane" world (no legal statute, no bank account opened in its name, no direct intervention...)

In sum, even more than Freemasonry itself, the Group of Thebes appears to be a sort of super-Masonry. How is it possible that Massimo Introvigne can frequent the activities of a secret association as a simple scholar, without taking part in them himself?

In fact, according to Faubert, Massimo Introvigne is one of the fifteen or so persons who, on 3 June 1990, founded the Group of Thebes in Paris. (cf. p. 47) And, by means of Introvigne, "two members of the Group of Thebes had been invited to the CESNUR congress in Santa Barbara in 1991, and four had been invited to France in 1992." (p. 50) It is now time to learn more about the group and its members. If Serge Faubert can be trusted, the Group has "a structure whose originality is to gather together the leaders of occultist groups and persons recognized in the small world of the initiates. A sort of college of leaders whose existence is even more secret than the society that leads it." (p. 46) The idea of "federating the small world of esotericism" was apparently that of a certain Rémi Boyer, with whom Introvigne wanted to found a new esoteric journal. (p. 52) Boyer spoke about it with Jean-Pierre Giudicelli, who is closely associated with Corsican separatists but also with right-wing groups and is leader "of the French section of Myriam, a Luciferian obbedience whose teachings concern the sexual impulses (*pulsioni*) of the adepts (Faubert, p. 46)." And then there is [Gérard] Kloppel, "worldwide grand master of the Memphis Misraim lodge", the inevitable Templars, [and] Christian Bouchet, who passed from the

neo-pagan Alain de Benoist's GRECE to become a "member of the Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO), the obbedience founded by the English magician Aleister Crowley (1887-1947), who proclaimed himself "the Great Beast 666"! (p. 48) Bouchet is also a national-Bolshevik, and because of this we should not be amazed by the presence, within this right-wing group, of ex-Red Brigadist Paolo Fogagnolo, who is currently associated with Rifondazione Comunista but also with...the Rosicrucians. It is really true, as Judge Cordova has said, that Freemasonry cuts across all the parties (and also the extra-parliamentary groups).

Now that the Group of Thebes is no longer a secret, what will happen? According to Faubert, it will "continue to function. In order to avoid further leaks of information, a reorganization is currently underway. On the other hand, from its first sessions the group had expected to regularly change its own name in order to hide its tracks. Perhaps the new name that has been selected is that of the secret lodge that united the majority of its members, with the significant exception of Christian Bouchet — the Hermetic Order of the Rosy Cross and of the Rose, the Ordo..." [L'Ordre Hérétique de la Rois Croix et de la Rose, l'Ordo...] (p. 52)

An Instructive Affair

I don't feel that it has been a waste of time to recount, in summary form, the adventures of Massimo Introvigne in Masonic circles. It seems to me that one can draw three very useful conclusions from this.

The first concerns Introvigne himself. Love, said Saint Paul, means "excuse all, have faith in all, hope for all, and endure all (1 Cor., 13, 7). With a supreme effort I can still accord the benefit of the doubt to our sectologist, and suppose that he hasn't been initiated into any type of Freemasonry. But the indications are so many and so convergent that doubt is, to say the least, permissible and proper. That he frequents these circles only to study them seems increasingly improbable and, in any case, he has moved far beyond that which is permissible. He would not be the first Catholic researcher of masonry to pass, with the help of the climate created by Vatican II, to the other side (cf. Caprile). I await explanations from Introvigne, and hope that he will have the decency to not move any closer to the cults.

The second concerns the "anti-cult" associations. The appearance does not always conform to the substance. For example, *Secrets et Sociétés*, the journal that violated the secrecy of the Group of Thebes, is itself

published by an ex-collaborator of GRECE. The congresses of CESNUR have gathered together, among the invitees, some members of the Group of Thebes. Is the cult monitoring organization becoming a screen to hide cultic activities? What does the utterly silent Monsignor Casale think of this?

The third concerns the circles of the so-called "right". In words, hostile to Freemasonry. In reality, very crowded with freemasons or, no matter how, very polluted by masonic ideas. Among the members of the scientific committee of *Ars Regia* we have noted the presence of well-known people such as [Franco] Cardini and Introvigne, who are esteemed both as Catholics and traditionalists. But there is also a certain Emilio Servadio, the father of Italian psychoanalysts and a collaborator of the journal of the Grand'Oriente d'Italia, *Hiram*. Although he is a Jew, in the 1930s he was a member with René Guenon and Julius Evola of the esoteric Group of Ur. Another "group" like that of the Group of Thebes? This would be an interesting path to follow or an interesting debate to open. Wouldn't now be the time to do a bit of intellectual cleansing in certain circles, not excluding our own Catholic circles?

[Roughly translated from the Italian by Jeff Bale]

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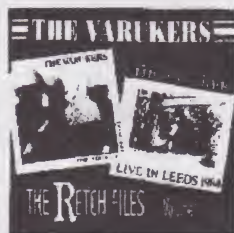
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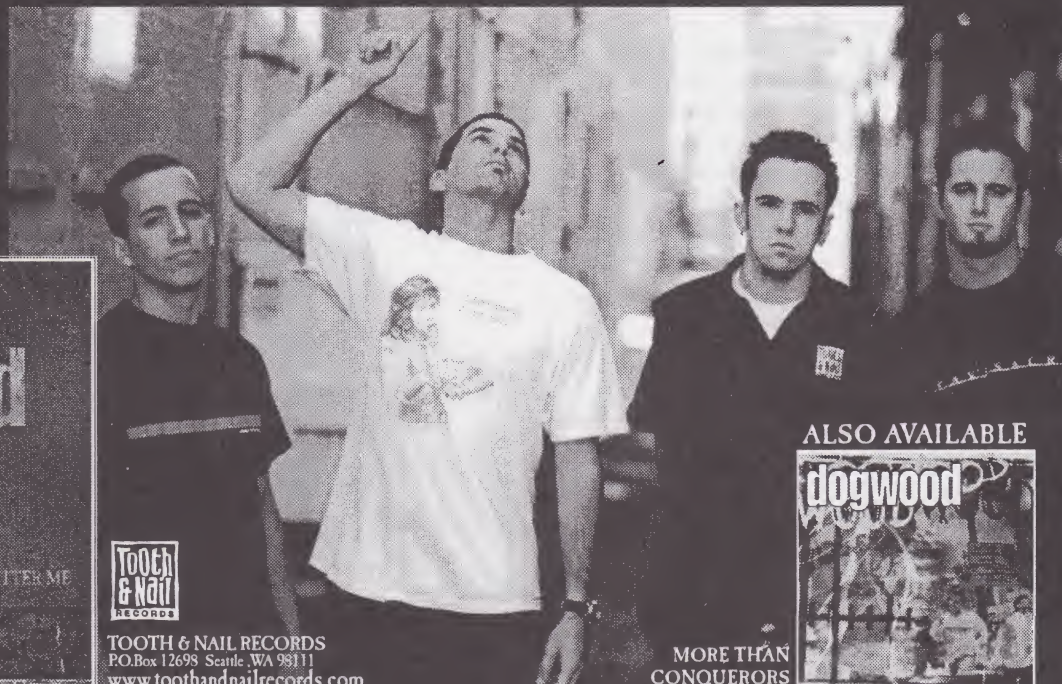
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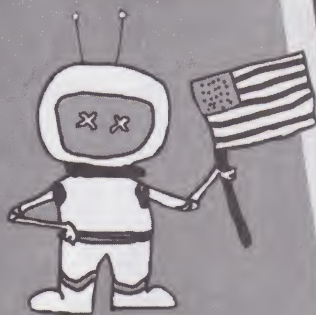
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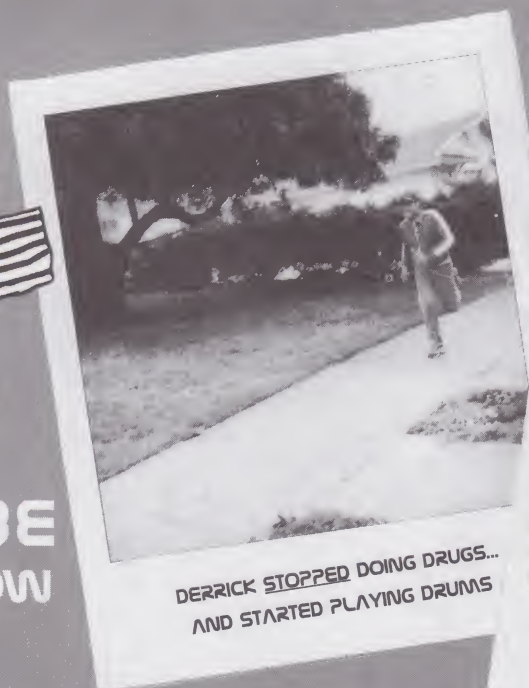
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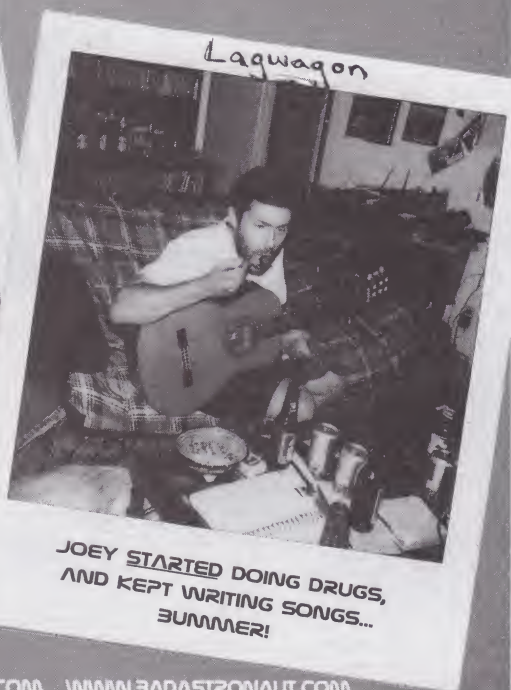
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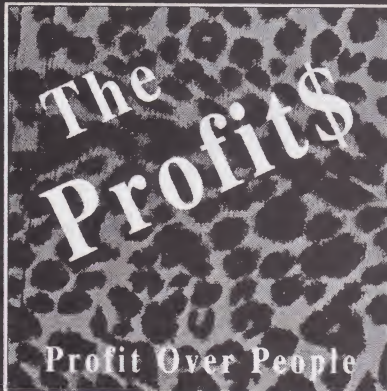


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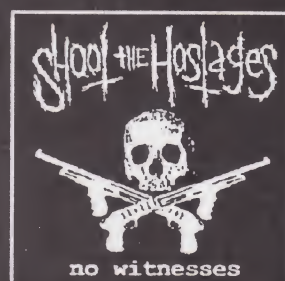
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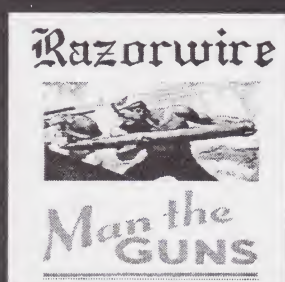
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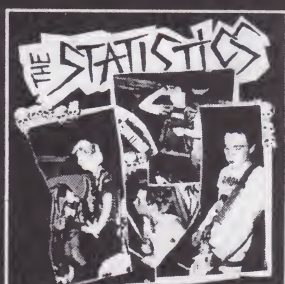
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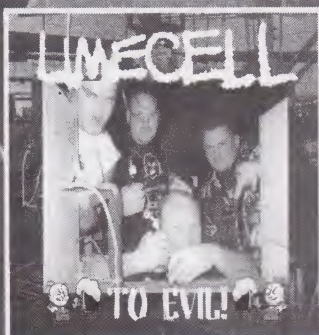
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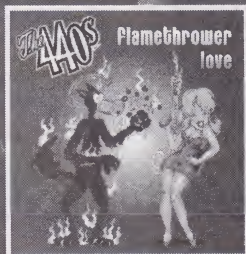
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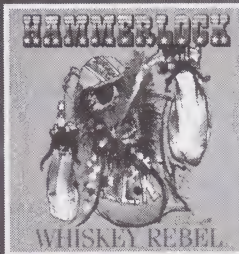
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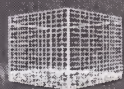


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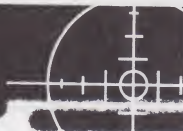
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At the risk of dating this column — they're all out of my consciousness within a couple of months after they're published anyway — as I write it's that weird time of year between Thanksgiving and Christmas where the majority of the country's population gets all out of focus. As far as I'm concerned there's really only a few things during this period to get excited about: work usually slows down in the last couple weeks of December, so I get to hibernate a bit with my hubby; we usually get invited to a couple of happenin' shindigs during

that needs to be wrapped up, out of town visitors, and the aforementioned parties/get togethers) my mind is a blur. I know you all don't wanna hear/read me babble on about my job or social life so trust me, this is the lesser evil. I've elected to pass on sharing the low lights because they're not worth repeating, so what follows are my thoughts on some of the more interesting things that happened to me over the past year.

The first thing that comes to mind is Steel Cage Records. I know I shouldn't be putting this in here, since it will more than likely be interpreted as a plug, but screw that. Who cares? I love my little record label! Oops, I mean our little record label — sorry Larry. We didn't even really set out to start a label; we were only gonna put out a single CD with our friends Limecell, just for kicks and because we are fans of the band and wanted to work on something together. I thought that would pretty much be the end of that, but a couple other projects soon came our way — ones that we were too interested in to say no to — and before I knew it we had a record label. The whole thing kinda took me by surprise, but in hindsight it was very exciting and it probably couldn't have gone any better even if we'd planned on starting a record label before we made plans to put any records out. Despite many years of dealing with the unpleasant aspects of the music industry at large (i.e., almost all of it) and becoming, at the very least, marginally jaded in the process, I am still a music fan. I'm not so jaded that I can't be enthusiastic about rock & roll. It's exciting to me that I can still get excited about records. For a while I thought that doing *C14* would ultimately ruin my passion for music, but I'm glad to report that starting/running the label has reversed whatever damage was done by years and years of dealing with smarmy two-faced publicists and hearing business-

men-and-women refer to music as "product." Not to mention that the process of putting out records is pretty fucking fun, as far as work goes, so hopefully we'll get paid by our distributors, won't have to declare bankruptcy or anything, and will be putting out good shit for many years to come.

2000 was also the year I turned 30 and, one month later, celebrated me and Larry's five-year

wedding anniversary. This one is pretty self-explanatory but, as many of you already know, there's something a little extra traumatic about hitting the 30 mark. Of course, as a girl, society already stamped me as past my prime when I turned 26 — 25 being the cut-off point, as far as being considered "young and hot" by the public at large.) I had been bracing myself — and Larry — since my 29th birthday for the possibility that something out of the ordinary might happen inside me when I turned 30. It didn't, but I wanted to be prepared in case I was suddenly struck by any odd urges. It's only been a couple of months, but so far so good. No unusual chaos. I haven't felt the urge to drastically alter my appearance (like get a boob job or stop wearing mini-skirts), change careers (of course I don't really have a career, so the desire

flipflops
AND
champagne



leslie goldman

the month of December; Bomp cookies; and the annual Leslie & Larry New Year's Celebration — the specifics of which must remain hush-hush. (We don't celebrate Christmas or Hanukkah, we're a pretty non-religious household in general, so we chose New Year's Eve as our celebratory holiday back in 1993 and we've observed it every year since. In a similar tradition, we could never figure out when exactly our "relationship" started — that in itself is a really long story, one that doesn't need to be told here — so Bastille Day was our anniversary until we got married.) Since we made the rules up ourselves, and they're always subject to revision on a whim, it's a low stress affair and my favorite holiday tradition.

I used to really despise the holiday season due to all of my horrible years of retail service, but I'm working on my six-year Retail Workers

Anonymous chip, so it doesn't bother me as much now. I never did get sentimental around the holidays; I'm not all that sentimental during the rest of the year either, but I do find myself feeling reflective around year's end. This was a very eventful year for me too, so it was inevitable that I'd end up doing some sort of mental inventory of the high/low lights of 2000 — I didn't expect it to end up in here but, you know, the column's due and I gotta write about something. I was gonna take the easy way out and turn in a list of my top ten releases of 2000, since we never do that in my own zine, but someone else requested that I submit that list to their publication and I don't want to repeat myself in print too much. Normally I don't have any trouble finding things to write about, but right now with all the year end stuff going on (work

***I bet Rev. Nørb doesn't
get letters from fellas in
the slammer,
commenting on the
cuteness of his photo.***

to have one would have been a huge change), or reproduce. Mostly I was worried about that last one, 'cause I've heard about that biological clock thing, but I still don't hear any ticking so there was no need to celebrate the occasion by giving up birth control. Good thing, 'cause in the midst of all that celebrating I was getting a lot of action from my loving and horny husband. Fortunately I still get laid all year 'round, not just on special occasions, so that's a good sign as far as the continuance of my happy marriage. (I've also heard sex is the first casualty when things start going bad.) Anyway, despite Larry's friend Mike's prediction that none of his friends could stay married more than five years ('cause that's as long they could stand being with one woman — yes, that is a direct quote), we're doing OK. Mike, as far as I know, is still single.

Another thing that really sticks out in my mind is Al Quint "calling me out" in his column. You know, I've often felt out of place among the other columnists here in *HL*. I don't know if I really fit in. (Although that didn't stop me from wanting to contribute — after all, whether or not I fit in is Jeff's problem.) But I'm not as cantankerous, jaded, infamous, or male as the majority of the other columnists. I don't inspire angry letters like a lot of the guys do, although I have inspired some prison mail. I bet Rev. Nørb doesn't get letters from fellas in the slammer, commenting on the cuteness of his photo, so I guess I've got that market cornered. At any rate, it usually takes me a couple weeks to read through a whole *HL* issue; I tend to read it in chunks, a few columns or features at a time, so I had the last issue for about a week before I got to Al's column. When I first noticed my name in there, before I actually read his comments, I was horrified and

LESLIE GOLDMAN

thrilled at the same time. Horrified because I thought maybe he'd written something nasty about me that I would have to respond to, thus starting one of those passive-aggressive inter-zine wars where people "argue" in a public venue by writing things back and forth to each other. (I've managed to avoid having one of those in the seven years I've been doing my own zine and writing for others, and I didn't want to have to start now.) At the same time, I was thrilled because I'd written something that prodded someone else to comment on it. Vindication as a columnist was mine! Then I read the damn thing and it was kind of anti-climactic. He didn't so much insult me or try to pick a fight with me as he did state his own opinion about my commentary on the RNC's visit to Hostile City. I can respect that. I think he's wrong, but he's certainly entitled to his own opinion. Plus he was so gosh-darn polite about the whole thing! I just couldn't get myself riled up about it. I was left wanting to bake him some cookies and write him a thank you note. So, in the end, no fire was ignited but it was still good for me — thanks, Al.

On that note, I'll cut this off. I promise to try and write about something more relevant and less time-specific next issue.

I'm the editor of Carbon 14 magazine. You can contact me at C14/PO Box 29247, Philadelphia, PA 19125

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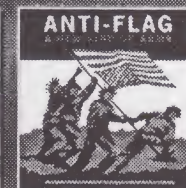


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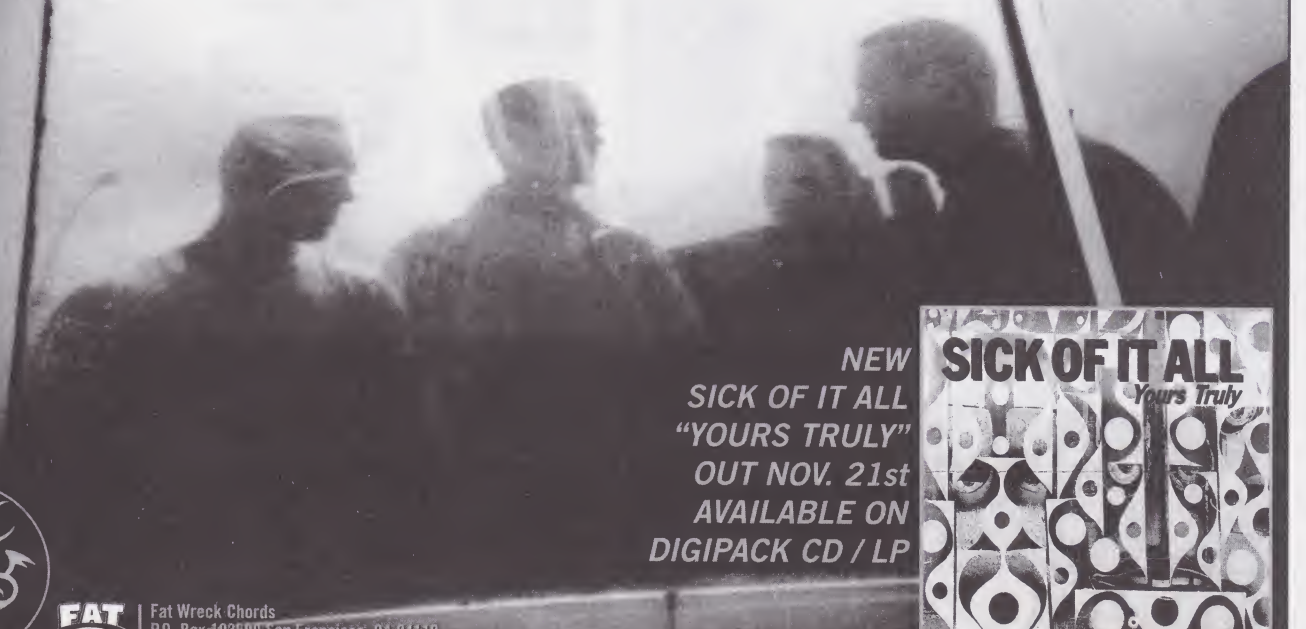
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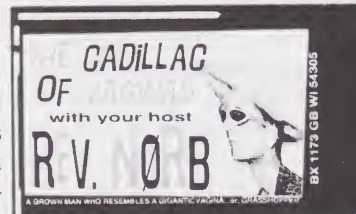
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This column was due yesterday! That's what Jeff Bale said! Actually, he said that yesterday! That means this column was due the day before yesterday! Now i need to type so quickly that i exceed the speed of light, travel backwards in time, and finish my column by 48 hours ago! That means exclamation points! Veritable oodles of glorious exclamation points! The more exclamation points one uses, the faster one writes! Only use one at a time though! Otherwise there's too much reverb!!! And echo!!! See??? THE KING!!! OF!!! MEDIA!!! See what i mean? Altogether too much costly, time-intensive sonorous clamor! WE SELL THE BEST!!! AND SERVICE THE REST!!! Okay! Enough tragic examples of dragging around the ballast of extra exclamation points! You get the picture! One exclamation point! That's as quickly as mortal man can write! But yet, i started this column at 8:12 PM CST 1.16.01! And now it's already 8:14 PM CST 1.16.01! That means even using the ultra-swiftness-evoking literary mechanism of ending each and every sentence with a sole exclamation point, i am still headed the WRONG WAY up the time stream! This is no good! My column is now due 48 hours and three minutes ago! Something's gone horribly awry!!! AND NOW I'VE SLOWED MYSELF EVEN MORE BY USING THOSE GODDAMN EXTRA EXCLAMATION POINTS!!! THE KING!!! OF!!! MEDIA!!! Stop it! Stop it i say! Cease! Desist! Villains!!! Dissemble no more!!! Tear up the planks!!! IT IS THE BEATING OF HIS HIDEOUS HEART!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Ohmigod! I just used so many exclamation points ending that last sentence that i have now actually PROPELLED MYSELF INTO THE FUTURE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Ack! I did it again! (as opposed to "Oops! I Did It Again!", which is another can o' reference entirely) Jet cars buzz the skies! Lasers are the can opener of choice! Manplanet are on the MTV Fashion Awards! Holy Marvin the Martian! How can i counteract this madcap temporal slingshot fast-forward effect and return to the mere 48-hours-and-five-minutes-lateness of my former present??? Help, Mister Wizard, help! I don't wanna be an exclamation-point-engorged time traveller anymore! Now, i know what you're saying: "Gosh, Rev. Nørb, shouldn't a pretentious, comic book collecting geek like yourself be aware of a multitude of time travel methods and solutions by virtue of which you could extricate yourself from the most sticky of futuristic wickets you now find yourself embroiled in?" which is, of course, a fair query! YES, at one point in time i was privy to all manner of pseudo-scientific conjecture by which i could reasonably be expected to devise a method to return from whence i came; however, after recently attending a lecture given by potentially renowned physicist Brian Greene (author of *The Elegant Universe* — i swear upon the BibleTron™ 2001 that that title was duly italicized, should it appear not so [note: "not so" is a very clever Spongetones reference, please credit my account] to the final consumer), i came away with several key components of my belief system assailed, and am unable to, in clear conscience, tamper with the time stream, lest it rend and tear asunder under the application

of my ill-conceived proddings and blurt me back to some irrevocably twisted and faulty version of 2001 — like, you know, some horrifying alternate timeline where Lionel Barrymore owns all the video stores in Bedford Falls, Gore is President because somebody stepped on a moth while brontosaurus hunting in the distant past, and i still write for MRR! Egads! The timbers shiver and the mizzenmasts tremble at the very thought! (hmm, that salty dialect brings to mind the question which has, of late, threatened to rip the Northeastern Wisconsin Punk Scene asunder [i realize that i just used "asunder" a few seconds ago, but, if you think about it, i hardly used that word all last year, so i think i have a free one coming], to wit: Who are cooler, Pirates or Vikings? I place myself squarely on the pro-Pirate side of this formidable and terrifying line in the sand: After all, pirates say cool stuff like "Arr" and "swab" and "bo'sun" and they have swanky eyepatches [for more eyepatch-related discourse, please see my column in Roctober #29 {the



the "MaximumSammySoul" issue} — although, be forewarned, every time i used the word "eyepatch" in the text of my column, the Roctober MegaCompute-O-Tron 2001™ brilliantly "fixed" it so it read "epoch" instead! All hail Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.! An agent of such immeasurable stature that he covers his discombobulated eye socket with an entire EPOCH! {actually, i sort of hate the word "epoch"! It's the kind of the word i use when i really don't know what i'm talking about! When i think of a word i use when i actually DO know what i'm talking about, i'll let you know!} and neat songs like "Yo Ho Ho And A Bottle Of Rum"; the Vikings just have better meal plans and funerals! Plus, the Pirates are cooler than the Vikings because the Vikings don't even wait to get to the Super Bowl before choking like they used to do in the 70's, but the Pittsburgh Pirates

After all, pirates say cool stuff like "Arr" and "swab" and "bo'sun" and they have swanky eyepatches...

remain eternally cool, even in the post-Stargell-Star era, merely by dint of their being the Bing Crosby character's favorite team in my favorite of the Hope/Crosby "Road" pictures, *Road to Bali*! [Crosby is out on the deck of a boat in the moonlight, trying to hit on Dorothy Lamour {wow, what a shockingly unexpected occurrence for a "Road" picture! Talk about left field!}, and tells Lamour he can't wait to get back to America and watch some ball games, "see the Pirates!" Lamour, of course, squeals "Pirates??? Where???" in alarm, jumping into Crosby's arms for protection! Crosby informs her that the Pirates are probably down in the cellar somewhere, and are nothing to be afraid of! Then Bob Hope comes out and starts babbling about the Cleveland Indians! Fuck him anyway! Goddamn ski-slope nosed junior-circuit-adoring bastard! Die Bob Die! {clever

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reference to the Fiends all-but-forgotten "We Have Come For Your Beer" LP circa 1984!} {oh, what the hell, one good "We Have Come For Your Beer" reference deserves another: RIOT IN THE MEN'S ROOM! RIOT IN THE MEN'S ROOM! RIOT IN THE MEN'S ROOM! RIOT IN THE MEN'S ROOM!} Actually, i just bought a drumset from a former AL pitcher {Paul Wilmet, Texas Rangers, 1989.

Lifetime stats: Games: 3, IP: 2, SO: 1, BB: 2, ERA: a sparkling 15.43} so maybe i should lay off Bob for a while! California Federal SAAAA-vinnnggggss!!!, so Pirates it is!

Of course, the pro-Viking forces attempt to counter-argue by claiming that it was, in fact, the Vikings who wrote "Good Head," completely rebuking my rebuke of Johnny Kidd & the Pirates contribution of "Shakin' All Over", but completely skirting the issue of the very existence of "Pirate Love" by the Heartbreakers in direct opposition to absolutely NO

Thunders-penned songs involving Vikings in the least! Well i never! [and what would "Viking Love" consist of, anyway? If Randy Moss was involved, probably two black eyes and a can o' mace! And why do they call him Randy "Moss" anyway? Is it because of that shit on his teeth?] [taking this completely pointless bilge {arr!} to its logical conclusion, what did Aaron Brooks of the Saints say when the play clock ran down before he could get the ball snapped? A: I got no time, I got no tii-iiimme!] [Wow, that was bad! Stop me before i start making jokes about Donovan McNabb having a "Peaceful Easy Feeling!")] Yeah, anyway, the upshoot is that i no longer feel confident tampering with the time stream because that goddamn Brian Greene FUCKED ME UP! I mean, i get up early Thursday morning, and drive to Appleton, Wisconsin, to go see this guy give what is touted to be a lecture on Superstring Theory, because Superstring Theory is cool, because "Superstring" seems like the missing link in some manner of Holy Trinity involving Supercharger and the Supersuckers, which thankfully removes Superchunk from the whole equation! (where the now-defunct Superconducting Supercollider fits into the equation is anybody's guess! [actually, FYI, it's actually written "Superconducting Super Collider," which makes no sense at all, which is not a clever reference to any Hüsker Dü song whatsoever. I mean, how can "superconducting" be one word and "super collider" be two? No wonder those illiterate fucks couldn't get funding!]) Anyway, i'm sitting in some kinda chapel with a bunch of college geeks, listening to this guy lecturing, and he's like blah blah blah Theory of Relativity,

blah blah blah Quantum Mechanics, blah blah blah Heisenberg, blah blah blah Uncertainty Principle, blah blah blah Patent Office in Berne, Switzerland, and i'm all like dude, hurry up and cut to the chase, even art majors know this shit, and he's still like blah blah blah gravity as space/time warp (he used the traditional analogy of space being a rubber sheet, so if a planet is like a bowling ball, the rubber sheet will curve/sag/bend/stretch to accommodate the bowling ball, so if you try to roll a Gobstopper™ across the rubber sheet while the bowling ball is sitting on it, the path of

the Gobstopper™ will curve in towards the bowling ball, and presto! Gravity! I actually think this is a pretty apt analogy [or is it a metaphor? Huh, NOW who's illiterit?], except, were i giving a physics lecture, i'd do away with the imagery of the rubber sheet and have the audience instead imagine that reality is actually one big check from Go-Kart Records), and he finally gets to the part about the extra dimensions, and i'm like OOH! OOH! MISTAH KOTTAH! I'M ALL ABOUT THEM EXTRA DIMENSIONS! and he says that there are probably

"ten or eleven" dimensions total and i'm like SIX DIMENSIONAL DWARF TWIN! TALK ABOUT THE SIX DIMENSIONAL DWARF TWIN! and he just rolls up a piece of notebook paper to illustrate how said bonus dimensions could be hidden from our observa-

OOH! OOH! MISTAH KOTTAH! I'M ALL ABOUT THEM EXTRA DIMENSIONS!



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tions, utters like one sentence on String Theory Proper (something really profound, like "well, see, String Theory says that atoms are made up of these like vibrating strings of energy, and the way they vibrate determines how the atoms will act" — well, shit fire, Bucky Roy, what the hell's so all-fired "super" about THAT??), then tells us in effect to keep our feet on the ground and keep reaching for the stars, and he's done! Well, what the fuck, man! I didn't hear ANY rational discourse about the six-dimensional dwarf twin at ALL! I could've gone to the lecture on Pirates vs. Vikings at Nate Shrubber's house this morning for all the good this skull session did me (actually, i think perhaps i'd like to be a Hittite instead of a Pirate, as sacking Aleppo and Babylon has always seemed like my idea of a good time! Fuck you, ya Phrygian! Go back to Phrygia! Phrygia sucks my cock! Phrygia sucks my cock!! I must probe further! This wound demands satisfaction! Pistols at twenty paces! Walk the plank, you scurvy son of a sheep-shank-tying Portuguese clubfooted poop deck attendant! So anyway, i go running to the front of the stage, where i have to patiently wait while Mr. Universe engages in spirited and lively discourse with some old bald dude with an accent like Apu from The Simpsons about the Second Law of Thermodynamics (and, presumably, its impact on the Cherry Slushy)! Finally, i seize an opening, and yell up to him (note: he is up on stage, i am in the mosh pit) words to the effect of "SIR! SIR! What sayest thou about the concept of the extra six (or seven) dimensions being contained in a six-dimensional dwarf twin universe; that, perhaps, reality was originally a perfect, sanguine ten (or eleven) dimensional space, and the moment of the Big Bang was, in fact, a hideous rupture in the fabric of the universe which split the very warp and woof (i did not actually say "warp and woof" — but i should have!) of the cosmos and yielded our three-spatial-dimension-one-temporal-dimension universe and a tiny, mysterious, parallel six-dimensional universe, popularly referred to as the "Six Dimensional Dwarf Twin," which i am at least mildly obsessed the concept of???" and he's like, "naw, fuck that" and he repeats his analogy with the rolled up piece of paper like i didn't get it and i repeat my point about the six-dimensional dwarf twin like he didn't get it and i ask him what he'd do if he were invisible for a day and he says he'd have to think about it so i leave and go eat at Taco John's™, even though i know full well how to get to at least one Appleton Taco Bell™ location from there! Now THAT'S distraught! How DARE this guy shoot down my beloved concept of the six-dimensional dwarf twin universe? Who the fuck does he think he is, anyway? So what if he's got a PhD and is a professor of Physics at Cornell? I'VE GOT MORE COMIC BOOKS THAN HE DOES, AND THAT MEANS I, REV. NØRB, AM THE BING CROSBY OF THIS TANDEM, AND HE'S JUST ANOTHER LOUSY BOB HOPE!!! I, REV. NØRB, COME UP WITH THE BRILLIANT IDEA TO MAKE SOME MONEY WITH A THRILLING "HUMAN CANNONBALL" CIRCUS ACT!!! HE, BRIAN "THE BRAIN" GREENE, JUST GETS IN THE DAMN CANNON AND TRIES NOT TO

***Sacking Aleppo and
Babylon has always
seemed like my idea of a
good time! Fuck you, ya
Phrygian! Go back to
Phrygia! Phrygia sucks my cock!
Phrygia sucks my cock!***

HIT ANYTHING THAT MIGHT PRESS CHARGES! I am BING! He is BOB! I get DOROTHY LAMOUR! He gets the USO gigs! Thank you PARAMOUNT! Know your role, ye swab! Know your role! Now, i know what you're saying: "By gadfrey, Rev. NørB, what the fuck is so great about the notion of a Six Dimensional Dwarf Twin Universe that hearing an esteemed physicist talk shit about it upsets you to the point where you eat lunch at Taco John's, which you normally only eat at when you're in Dubuque, Iowa, because you have no clue where the Taco Bells are in Iowa and know that if you don't eat in Dubuque you'll probably die of hunger before you reach Cedar Rapids? Aren't there other stupid crackpot theories of physics you can champion in its stead? Whyfore would a lusty Friend O' The Pirates like yourself carry such a torch for one specific pointy-headed conjecture anyway? Can't you just obsess over

that thing where the cat in the shoebox may or may not be dead? That seems more your speed anyhow!" , and your point is not without a certain modicum of sanity, matey — however, i cling to the apparently outmoded notion of a Six Dimensional Dwarf Twin Universe™ because, if there WERE a Six Dimensional Dwarf Twin Universe™, I'D HAVE ALL OF REALITY FIGURED OUT! However, if no Six Dimensional Dwarf Twin Universe™ doth exist, i'm keelhauled! Shark bait! Foist on my own petard! Wait, that's not pirate talk! Scratch me last salty utterance, ya peg-legged mandrill head! Regardless, my theories of the universe can best be

explained thus: As ye may or may not know, our universe is currently described by most pirate-approved physicists as having, and i quote, which should explain the presence of the quotation marks, "three spatial dimensions and one temporal dimension!" Which means the relatively important query of "how many dimensions does our universe have?" is actually a trick question, unless it is actually a trickless question that merely commands a trick answer, which is sort of annoying as well! Furthermore, it has been speculated for at least the last ten years or so that our universe has a number of Mystery Dimensions which neither Pirate nor Viking, due to the relative flatness of our corporeal aspects, can detect! These Mystery Dimensions were first brought to my attention in Steven Hawking's *A Brief History of Time*, which i do not own! Hawking postulated that, more than likely, our universe actually had either 10 or 26 dimensions total (i recall no real reasons given why 10 and 26 would be preferable to 5 thru 9 and 11 thru 25, although it might have to do with the fact that when i had cable, for a while channel 26 was cable channel 10), and for quite some time, whenever the manly topic of Mystery Dimensions was raised in print, the number of total dimensions our universe was eventually expected to be found to have was, more often than not, ten — leading me to believe that our universe got four dimensions, and

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our dwarf twins (Kirby Puckett? Whaa?) (it had been postulated, at least by one other author, that the "extra" dimensions were off in a teeny-tiny universe of their own somewhere, hence the term "dwarf twin") got six because Mom always liked them best! But now, NOW, NOW this Brian Greene swab has been saying "er, well, ten or eleven," so NOW, as far as i can tell, the official party line of the eggheads, doubledomes and miscellaneous crackpots who tell us these things is that yeah, there's like "either ten or eleven" dimensions total — which, if you'll notice, implies that "how many dimensions are there total?" is ALSO a trick question of sorts (it's not a legitimate trick — the trick is that they actually don't know what the fuck they're talking about)! Further, this also means that "how many Mystery Dimensions are there?" is a THIRD question w/nebulous answer (as opposed to E. Nebulous Neezer, and, in case you're not keeping score, the answer is "uh, i guess 6 or 7," which is also Neezer's age)! So! Brothers in Piracy! Who among us can claim to be SO doggone addlebrained as to NOT see a pattern emerging??? There are, or so they say, ten OR ELEVEN dimensions total, which means that there are six OR SEVEN Mystery Dimensions we can't detect because we can experience only three OR FOUR dimensions tops! (please! No breaking out into hearty refrains of "My Beautiful Balloon!" I'll have none of this gaseous horseplay!) I mean, has anyone at all failed to see that EVERY DIMENSIONAL COMPUTATION these guys have come up with is OFF BY THE SAME AMOUNT? And has anyone failed to see that the tally of Known Dimensions (3 or 4) is off by the same amount as the tally of Unknown Dimensions (6 or 7), but that the tally of Known Dimensions is askew merely due to the semantic issue of separating our three spatial dimensions from our one temporal dimension, whereas the tally of Unknown Dimensions is off just because no one has figured it out yet? And has anyone failed to wonder if, perhaps, the reason why no one is clear on whether there are six extra dimensions or seven extra dimensions might, in fact, BE THE SAME REASON WHY NO ONE IS EXACTLY CLEAR on whether we experience THREE DIMENSIONS or FOUR DIMENSIONS??? Has it EVER OCCURRED to any of these fucking Vikings in charge of scientific research that the reason why there might be either six or seven dimensions we don't experience is THE EXACT SAME REASON why there are either three or four dimensions that we DO experience? Because, fucking DUH, the Mystery Dimensions are NOT six or seven as-yet-unknown spatial dimensions, they're SIX SPATIAL DIMENSIONS and ONE TEMPORAL DIMENSION!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! I mean, how FUCKING HARD was that??? I was a fucking ART MAJOR and a PIRATE and i figured it out!!! So now, okay, you're saying, "Arrr, but Cap'n Nørb! How can Time (dba that one pesky temporal dimension) be one of the Mystery Dimensions, when it is, in fact, already one of the Non-Mystery Dimensions? Isn't this some manner or Grand Cosmic Bigamy, or, at the very least, a Double Dribble of some sort?" Arr, matey, glad ye asked that! Me further salty speculations go forth as follows: Firstly, ain't it more than slightly askew that The Scientific Community continues to make a distinction between spatial dimensions and temporal dimensions when they have long since embraced the concept of "space/time" as an integrated whole? Furthermore, ain't it damnably queer that we can move about pretty much wherever the blazes we want to in the first three dimensions, but are always stuck in one place, headed in one direction, in the temporal dimension? Ya wanna know why that is? I'll TELL ya why that is! It's because someone ELSE is stuck in the time stream WITH us, and they're blocking the goddamn passing lanes! Ya know WHO is blocking the goddamn passing lanes???

NO!!! IT'S NOT THE FRICKING VIKINGS!!! IT'S THE SIX DIMENSIONAL DWARF TWIN UNIVERSE, THAT'S WHO!!! AND THEY'RE HEADING THE WRONG WAY!!! It's like this, man: Prior to the Big Bang, the universe was ten-dimensional! (i have witnesses!) Somehow, somebody fucked something up, and the universe ripped apart (see also: Big Bang) into two chunks: Our three-dimensional digs and the six-dimensional dwarf twin universe. Our universii are STILL CONNECTED by ONE DIMENSION, however, and that is Ye Olde Temporal Dimension of Time! However, the deal is that we are always moving in one direction (forward, i guess) in time, whilst they are always moving the other way — it's like bumper-to-bumper traffic on a two-lane highway with no exits, and these assholes won't let us pull out to pass! Alternately, it's like my cassette with the Rip Offs "Got A Record" on one side and Screeching Weasel's "How To Make Enemies" on the other; our "Heatseeker" is their "I Wrote Holden Caulfield!" Our "Rip Your Heart Out" is their song about Cathy jumping off the goddamn roof! Eventually, the tape ends, and auto-reverse kicks in! Our Big Bang was their Big Crunch! Our Big Crunch is their Big Bang! You got your Chocolate in my Peanut Butter! Gimme back my Fruity Pebbles! We each lay claim to HALF of the time dimension; this means that, truth be told, we live in a 3.5-dimensional universe paired with a 6.5-dimensional universe on Side B! TAKE THAT, VIKINGS! Well NO i didn't do any goddamn research on this, why should i??? I'm the fuckin' BRAINS of the operation!!! I just THINK of this shit, then i let the grunts like Brian Greene do the legwork! Why shit in your own nest, ya know? Anyway, the bottom line is that MY BRILLIANT THEORY on the TEN-DIMENSIONAL NATURE OF THE UNIVERSE DOESN'T WORK if there is no six-dimensional dwarf twin universe to half-clog the temporal dimension! Not to put too fine a point on it, but fuck that shit!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Now, as always, i know what you're saying: "Damn, Rev. Nørb, we really enjoyed your senseless exposition on the ten-dimensional nature of the universe, as well as your occasional work with the always topical Pirate v. Viking conundrum, but, uh, exactly...WHAT...does this have to do with rock & roll..?" Glad you asked that, Scurve! Do recall that, due to unjudicious use of punctuation, i have accidentally flung myself into the future! How far into the future we cannot say! How this temporal mishap ties into rock & roll is thus: Last night, for the first time in known memory, i was suddenly and relatively inexplicably gripped with the chilling suspicion that ROCK & ROLL WILL NOT LAST FOREVER! It is going to WITHER and DIE! It will not outlast our universe! It will not outlast our sun! IT WILL DIE BEFORE OUR RACE REACHES EXTINCTION! This Ragnarok of Rock & Roll (ye gads! I just embraced Viking mythological concepts! UNCLEAN! UNCLEAN!) may or may not happen in my lifetime; i guess it kinda depends on how long i live and how sharply the relevancy of rock continues to trend downward! However, sooner or later, rock & roll is gonna be a quaint, full-fledged museum piece, like (post Be Sharps) barbershop quartet music, or (post Happy Schnapps Combo) polka, or (post Gregory) Gregorian chants! I'd venture to say that rock & roll will probably have become rendered more or less completely inert by the time 2050 A.D. rolls around! Hey, don't shoot the messenger! In any event, having errantly transported myself to said rockless future in the interests of beating a deadline, my column has nothing to do with rock & roll because, here in the future, there is no rock & roll to write about — though my one techno record with the blank white cover with the nine holes poked in it still gets played on the oldies stations here. I'll write if i get work.

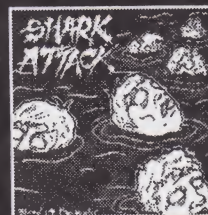
Oh, and stop me if you've heard this one before: No future for you! +

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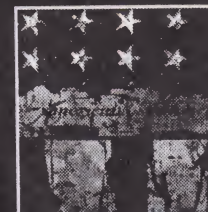
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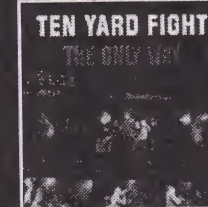
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I have been asked by this fine publication to shed a little light on Philly's sexiest, sassiest musical export, the 440s. It's not always easy to interview a band that you know as people but I, shewhocannotbenamed, never back away from a challenge. Before we get to the interview let's identify the players; we'll start with the lady first. On lead guitar and vocals: the talented and lovely Ms. Sparkle Plenty (she is also known and referred to in the interview by her non-rock name, Wendy). Also on lead guitar, and sometimes vocals: the equally talented and lovely Superstar Steve Wolff. Providing the backbeat we have Hollywood Jay on bass and Downtown Dave on drums; 12' 8" of rhythm section, so tall and dangerous that their last names—much like my identity—cannot be revealed. Check out this rock & roll extravaganza for yourselves as they criss-cross the country in every way imaginable in support of their latest CD, *Hot To Go*—leaving a trail of broken hearts and guitar strings, not to mention empty plates, in their wake.

The 440s

Was Dr. Bob's still together when the 440s started?

Sparkle Plenty/Wendy: Yep.

What was your intention when you started the band?

SP: The situation was that Todd, who was the guitar player for Dr. Bob's, would not tour. And we knew we could only go so far without touring. There were a lot of things, I was starting to get frustrated; I wanted to play guitar. I wanted to be in a two-guitar band, and I wanted to write different kinda songs. Ben [Brower of the Stuntmen; he, Dave and Wendy were the first three members] was actually the one who suggested I start a side band. So originally it was just gonna be a side-project so I could play guitar, and just have a different band. Then the right thing to do took over. We knew Dr. Bob's was gone; we were just beating a dead horse. And here we are.

Downtown Dave: The point I wanted to make was, when we met Steve—we weren't really a band at that point. When Steve joined, I think, is when we really became a band. We hadn't really played out live, we just practiced in our basement; so it really was a side-project.

SP: We played a couple shows. [laughing] We played with Nashville Pussy.

DD: It still just didn't seem like it was a band yet. We had known Steve for years because he used to work at Rock and Roll Plus [a punk rock CD store/"boutique" on South Street that once employed Steve and Ben.] We used to consign Dr. Bob's stuff there. Most of the people who work on South Street are strung-out, rude hipsters; there are a few cool people that work down there, but Steve was super fuckin' cool.

SP: He was the nice guy.

DD: He was the most down to earth, nice guy. When you'd go into the store, he'd be happy to see you. We didn't know his name. We'd always forget his name, but we

knew he was in the band Hummer so we'd always call him Hummer dude. Wendy would say, 'Hey, I went and checked on the merch,' and I'd say, 'Who was there?' and she'd say 'Hummer-dude.' So when he came to join the band it was so weird, it was like 'Weird... Hummer-dude's in our kitchen!'

Then he became 440 dude. Did you start calling him by his real name at that point?

DD: Of course. I knew his name was Steve by then, but it was just funny.

Steve, what was your impression of the band before you joined?

DD: He'd just gotten dumped.

Superstar Steve Wolff: Actually at that point... did I [just get dumped]? Oh yeah.

Hollywood Jay: That's funny, 'cause I had just broken up with my girlfriend [when I joined the band] too.

Tell the truth, Steve. This is the tape recorder of truth; it can tell when you're lying.

SSW: OK, here we go. All-time low, girlfriend of three years dumped me. I hated my band, hated my job, whatever. I hated your band too.

SP, DD & HJ: Oooooohhh.

Wait, I take that back. I didn't hate your band; I have a beef with one specific member of your old band.

SSW: Oh, so did I—with the same member. Anyway, so I remember I came strolling into Rock and Roll Plus to visit Ben, and I saw a flyer on the wall that said 'guitarist wanted.' I knew that it was Ben's handwriting 'cause we had worked together for so long, so I said, 'Oh, I'll play

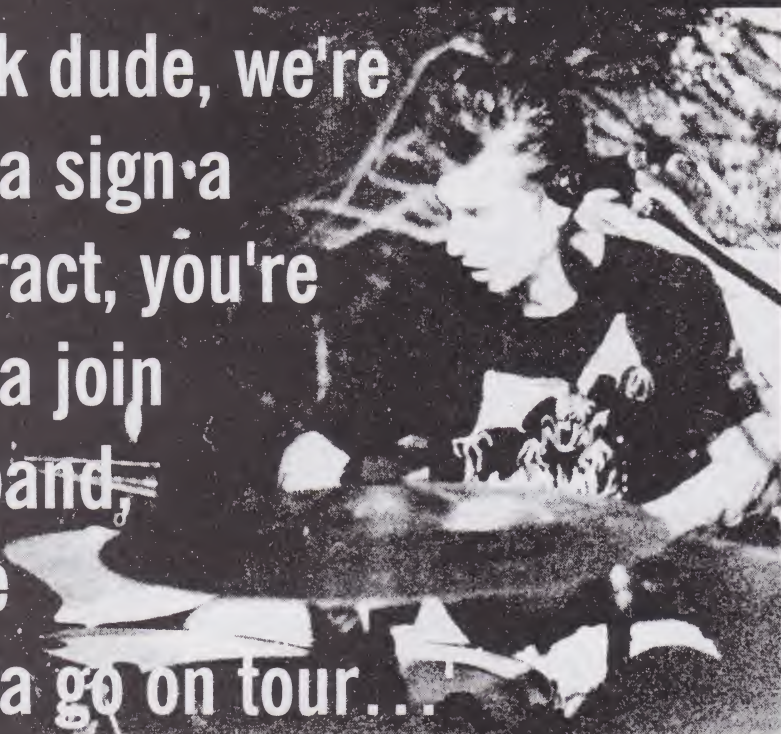


guitar.' It was just one of those things. I had seen them at that Humpers/Leaving Trains show and I thought, 'Oh, cool.' Because what I was playing then, I couldn't stand and they were closer to what I'm into. Even though I didn't know what to expect—for me it was just something to do. So I showed up at their house and set up in the basement, we went though the songs and I was like, 'I don't know. Is this good?' And they said, 'Wanna play a show next week?' So we played a show at the Court Tavern [New Brunswick, NJ] the next week, and I was learning the songs on my Walkman in the van on the

like, 'I don't know, is he really gonna be into this?' Considering what they sounded like—but we didn't know that you weren't into them anymore at that point.

SSW: My whole thing was... 'Wow, I'm in a band that's actually playing shows.' We were playing shows every weekend somewhere and practicing. It wasn't just like Wednesday night crappy shows; it was like every show we played we were with a band who I actually knew who they were. It was like, 'Wow, this isn't bad.' And that's never gone away.

'Look dude, we're gonna sign a contract, you're gonna join the band, we're gonna go on tour...'



way up and making notes on my set list and stuff like that.

At that point did you think to yourself, 'I'm in a band with two sober people, that means more drink tickets for me.'

[Dave and Wendy laugh]

SSW: No, I actually didn't realize that at that point.

SP: But at the end of the night he sure did! (imitating a drunk, loud, Steve) '... oh yeah, and another thing...'

DD: He got shitfaced drunk after his first gig.

SSW: I always get drunk there.

SP: I have to say something about that too. I was familiar with Hummer as well and when Ben first mentioned that Steve wanted to play Dave and I were kinda

That brings us to my next question—

SP: Wait, what about Jay?

Hold on sister, I was just getting to Jay. So had you seen the band before you joined?

SP: We have evidence to prove it.

HJ: Yeah. I was playing with a band called the Rumlbers. We were auditioning singers and it was going nowhere, trying to find somebody. The Rumlbers had done a split 7" with the Gotohells; and the Gotohells were playing at Nick's so I went to see them. The 440s were opening, and I thought they were great. I got really drunk and was talking to Wendy after the show; with Dave looming in the background.

DD: I wasn't looming in the background.

HJ: You were looming. And there were two of you if I remember correctly. After that night I realized I was really incredibly drunk, and Wendy had mentioned she had worked at a tattoo shop which was on my way home, back to Philly, from where I was working in Jersey at the time. So I stopped in—

SP: Wearing a Motörhead shirt.

HJ: —wearing a Motörhead shirt. Is that what got him in the band?

SP: Part of it.

HJ: It was part of it. So I gave her my number and said, 'If you ever need a bass player...' which I had never done before.

And what, like six months later...

SP: Rob Smentek had just joined the band at that point, when we met Jay. I was like, 'Nah, we've always been looking for bass players, but we've got our bass player now.'

HJ: Yeah, you were pretty serious.

But Rob didn't like to tour?

SP: Yeah, he quit. We went on a tour not too long after that and he quit right after the tour.

DD: Wendy really wanted Jay to join the band—because of the Motörhead shirt—[laughing]

DD: —and he was super friendly that night, when he was really drunk. He was this smiling greaser dude; he was really nice and kept apologizing for being drunk. I asked him, 'Are you OK to drive home?' and he says, 'I drive home like this every night!' I'm thinking, this guy's a fuckin' lush, so whenever Wendy would bring him up I'd be like, 'That fuckin' drunk? No way!' [Wendy is cracking up] It is pretty funny.

HJ: But I knew Ben; Ben vouched for me.

And just for the record, you haven't sobered up any.

HJ: Nah.

DD: No, Jay's all right. But I just was like, 'Great, now we're gonna go on tour with somebody who fuckin drinks and drives!'

So now he just drinks and doesn't drive.

HJ: I sweat.

DD: When the shit hit the fan and Dionysus wanted to sign us and Rob quit, Wendy said, 'We've gotta get that guy Jay.' Even I had turned around at that point. When Jay came over to play with us that day he pulled up in a killer truck, an old '72 Chevy truck, and I really liked that. I had talked to him on



the phone and he was cool and he was really into cars. So he pulls up, he's not even out of his fuckin' door and I'm tellin him, 'Look dude, we're gonna sign a contract, you're gonna join the band, we're gonna go on tour...' We practiced and he was like, 'I'm gonna go outside and smoke a cigarette.' Then he was gone for like five minutes, and I thought he was gonna hop the fence and never come back, but he was still out there so I sat down and talked some more at him. He must've just been like, 'What the fuck?'

Were you, Jay?

HJ: Well, I was still in the Rumlbers at that point—

SP: That's kinda the thing with this whole band, we all joined when our old bands were falling apart.

When you guys drive in the van you don't have a radio but you have a boom box, right?

SP: Well, since the fuse blew.
DD: Yeah, the van has radio issues.

Who gets to decide what is listened to?

All: The driver.

All right, I'll ask this question to each of you separately or you can just go around the room.

HJ: I have to pee so I'm gonna let these guys talk.

What is the most annoying thing—

SP: Jay's pop punk.

—played by another member of the band in the van?

SP: Jay's pop punk.

HJ: [from the bathroom down the hall] I can still hear you!

What do you play that annoys everyone else?

SP: Ted Nugent annoys Jay. Jay and I have pop-punk/Ted Nugent issues.

We'll let Jay comment when he comes back. Dave?

DD: What's the most annoying? I actually don't have problems with other people's stuff. We made fun of Steve for listening to Fu Manchu, but it wasn't that Fu Manchu was bad—it was that Steve was driving at the time. He looked like a Mitch O' Connell drawing; all hunched over and sweating—
SP: 'I gotta listen to Fu Manchu!'

DD: Yeah, that was the only way Steve could drive. But I got turned on to a lot of stuff. I mean I've never listened to such a strong dosage of Mike Ness as I did sitting next to Jay on a cross-country tour.

Did you get used to it?

DD: Oh yeah, I like it. I don't have any problems with it. And as far as me, a lot of times when I drive I don't play any music at all; I like it quiet. But I'm known to bring out the Wretched Ones. Chronic Wretched Ones is probably what I play the most... these guys tease me sometimes about playing them all the time. Is that right? Is there something I play that annoys you guys?

SP: We'll get to that.

HJ: I like the Wretched Ones.

SP: I have to admit that the whole pop-punk/Mike Ness/Social Distortion thing bugs me because I almost start to like it by the end of the tour.

[laughing] The truth comes out!

SP: I have an image to uphold. [laughing] I can't like pop-punk.

Jay, you wanna jump in? You missed your turn.

HJ: I brought a Walkman on the last tour, so whenever anybody threw in something I didn't like, I'd just pretty much go up in the loft and put on my Walkman.

Steve?

SSW: The bands that cross the glam-metal line that Wendy listens to, like LA Guns... Kix really get on my nerves. I put earplugs in now and just filter it.

SP: I don't think you play anything that annoys anyone.

SSW: The thing that I play that probably even annoys me is that the bands that I like have high end, trebly, lo-fi recordings. It's like [makes static noise].

DD: There is one thing though, I think





"After we were done I looked and the whole back of my skirt was split open and my ass was hanging out."

there is one unifying tape that tends to get everybody into it. I don't know if these guys would agree but the New York Dolls, "Night of The Living Dolls." It always seems that if nobody's talkin', by the third song everybody's talkin' to each other again. It just seems to stimulate the band. **SSW:** The Devil Dogs are like that too, though.

SP: Yeah, and the Supersuckers.

HJ: Yeah. Well that's the thing, everybody likes something different but there's always common ground.

I have a separate question for Wendy. What's the dumbest thing a guy has ever said to you at a show?

DD: It's gonna take awhile for her to tabulate and sort it all because believe me, there are many.

SP: I can't remember exactly what was said but when we played in Pittsburgh (this is when Rob was playing with us) these stupid, bonehead drunk guys were hitting on me but trying to make it seem like they weren't. I don't remember what they were saying but after they left Rob came over and said, 'God, I feel dumber for just standing here listening to that.' I'll tell you

the thing that pissed me off the most. This wasn't after we played but on the road—so many times you go somewhere and people say, 'Are you guys in a band?' And then they look at the guys and then look at me and go, 'Oh, are you the singer?' There's nothing wrong with being the singer, but I don't want my instrument being based on my sex—an assumption that I'm the singer because I'm female.

HJ: They probably think you're the bass player.

SP: That's only people who know a little bit about music. Or when we were in fuckin' Fort Wayne, Indiana, we were in this little restaurant/breakfast place and this guy was like, 'Oh, so you guys are in a band?' And he looks at me and goes, 'You're just traveling with these guys?' And I'm like, 'I'm the fucking singer and guitar player...'

DD: And chief songwriter.

SP: Yeah. '...I wrote most of fucking songs and I booked this fucking tour!' I didn't say that, but...

You should have.

SP: That's the kind of stuff that pisses me off. Here's a dumb thing that someone said, you know, when I was all sweaty, just getting off stage—'You guys were pretty good tonight. I've seen you better but, you

know, it wasn't bad.'

SSW: Yeah, after a good show.

HJ: The backhanded compliment.

SP: Right. I mean, if I ask what you think then tell me that, but when I'm sweating my ass off and just got done pouring my heart out...

I know I've seen some fun stuff happen during a set, women getting up on-stage and disrobing... what are some of the stranger things that have happened while you were playing?

DD: Nobody saw this except for me but when we were playing our record release party, Mike from Twin Six's fiancé—I was getting ready to start a song and all of a sudden I felt hands go down my pants and pull my shirt up, and she started talking my shirt off and dancin' and pressin' and doin' all kinds of stuff.

SP: I just hear this, 'Oh... OK.'

[laughter]

HJ: I've got two weird on-stage things. One was at the Ottobar (in Baltimore) when the girls were topless on-stage.

SP: Ohh, the show my dad was at.

HJ: There was an amazing amount of topless women on-stage. At one point this girl's ass was on my bass and I had to move my strings away from her to be able to play. Another was when we were on the Warped Tour, I knocked my microphone—I don't know, I hit it or I jumped, I did something—and there was a barricade with a wall of big, burly bouncers to keep all these kids from attacking us or whatever, and I knocked my microphone down and it whapped one of them right in the head. The kids were like, 'Yeah! Stick it to the man!' I apologized, cause he could have crushed me no problem.

DD: He thought it was funny.

HJ: Yeah, he was cool but the kids were like, 'Yeah! Fuck the man!'

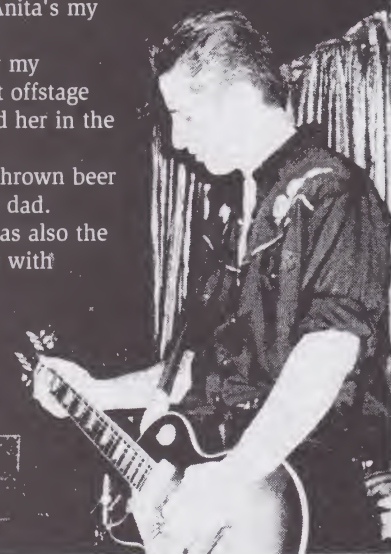
HJ: Didn't I hit Anita with my hat?

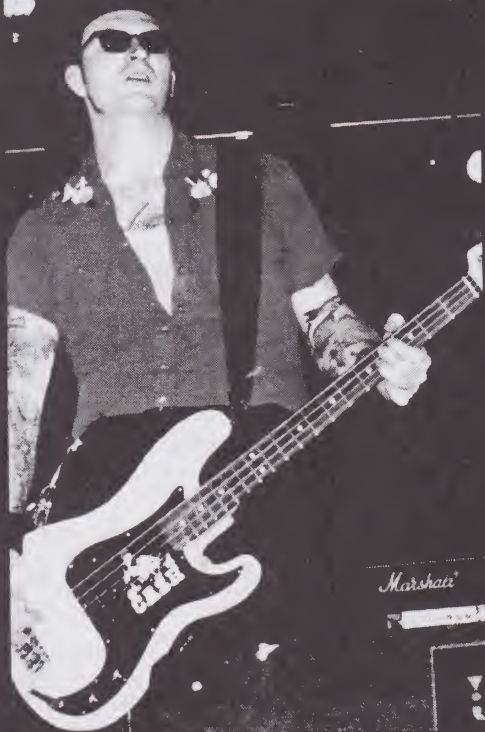
SP: Yeah. Anita's my step mom.

HJ: I threw my cowboy hat offstage and wacked her in the head.

SSW: I've thrown beer at Wendy's dad.

SP: That was also the same show with the topless girls.





SSW: That first time Jay saw us, when he was drunk, I fell through the stage and cut my leg up and got stuck. And then Wendy wacked me in the head with her guitar.

HJ: What about Beers?

DD: Jay's groupie!

HJ: When we were in San Antonio I went to go see David Allan Coe with this guy Beers and this other girl whose name I can't remember. So we saw David Allan Coe and Beers and this girl came back to the show. He really liked us and was really drunk; he ended up smashing a bottle on the stage and doing the crimson mask—cutting his forehead—during our set, bleeding all over the place, trying to get near me. After the show he comes up and says, 'Oh, dude, you guys were great, blah blah blah...' and I'm like, 'That's great, get away from me. You're fucking covered in blood, you're freakin' me out.' And his comment to that was, 'Oh, don't worry, dude, I get tested every three months.'

[laughter] What the fuck do you do to get tested every three months? What kind of life do you lead?! Get the fuck away from me. Eventually they shuffled him out and it was all clear. But I love that guy, he's the best.

SP: We were playing Sleazefest last summer, and I was wearing this vinyl skirt that zipped up and had all these laces and stuff. It was really tight. We were playing and I thought something felt kinda weird, and I couldn't figure out what it was. We were playing a little bit more and something felt really weird. After we were done I looked and the whole back of my skirt was split open and my ass was hanging out.

Dave, you didn't alert her to that fact?

DD: Ummm, I was busy.

Otherwise occupied at that time?

DD: I was [pause] busy.

Did you care that your ass was hanging out?

SP: Nah.

DD: Fuck 'em.

HJ: It was the best 440s show ever.

For the other members of the band?

SP: And for the audience.

So this tour you guys are gonna do is the second or third full US tour?

DD & SP: Third

And the third with Jay?

HJ & SP: Second.

DD: There was something I was thinking. I don't know if this happens a lot but—I think it was Jay who was telling me that someone said 'You guys are going out on tour for two months? You must hate each other afterwards!' And the last couple tours, when I got back to town I almost didn't know what to do without these guys. It's really weird. Like thinking 'What are we doing for lunch today?' and then realizing we don't have to make those plans anymore. When we're on the road

we all get along really well.

HJ: It's disgusting.

DD: Jay and I had some flare-ups on the last tour but...

I thought that had all been settled by you [Dave] taking your pants off at the record release party.

DD: That happened. And I can tell you this, Jay is not a welcher. The reason Jay and I argue is because we're a lot alike.

SP: You have the same birthday

HJ: We're very similar. But of course, Dave's a lot older.

DD: All right, so now we're gonna talk about how much I have to eat—not how much I like to eat but how much I have to eat.

I know, because clearly you're...

DD: I'm six-four, I weigh 165 pounds and I cannot gain weight. I'm very thin. And I eat a lot.

SSW: Yeah, you only weigh 15 pounds more than me. [Steve is about 5'8"] Why don't you give the background of your bet.

DD: There was a bunch of fighting on the road because...

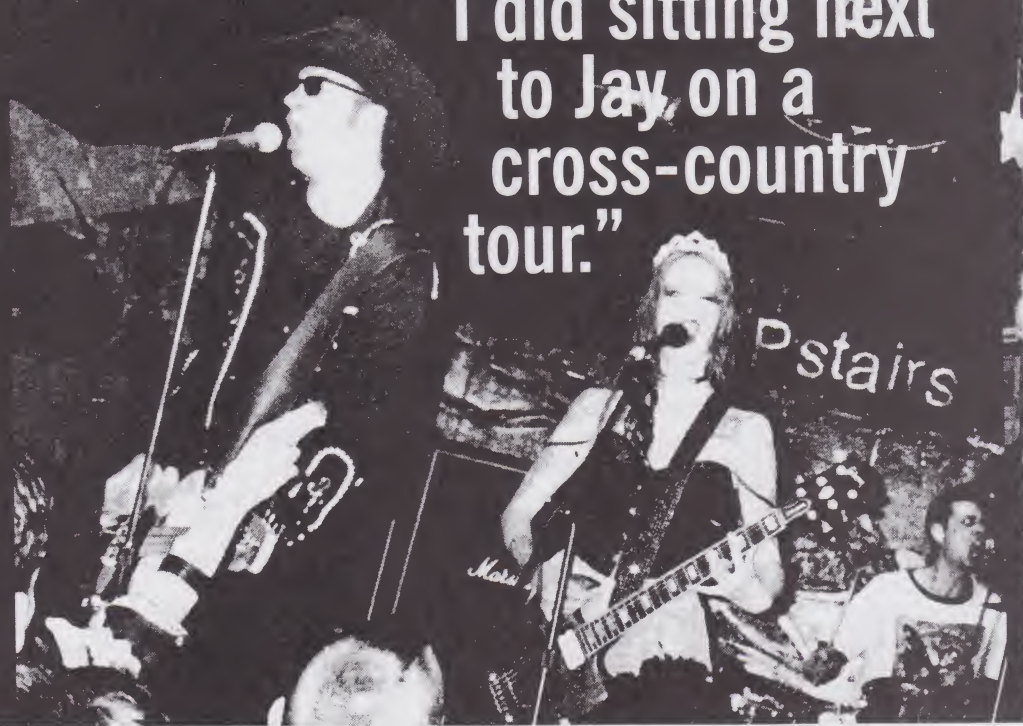
SP: Jay wanted to shop and Dave wanted to eat.

DD: And there was pressure because...

HJ: I just wanted to see towns that we were in other than the insides of diners.

DD: We had to leave New Orleans early.

"I've never listened to such a strong dosage of Mike Ness as I did sitting next to Jay on a cross-country tour."



Then the van broke down, me and Jay started disagreeing and Jay clammed up. Then we started talking at the gas station and Jay stated his case, and it took me a few minutes before I stated my case. We ended up fighting for about a half-hour driving to Pennsacola. Then I seem to remember it being over, it was like a blow-up and then that was it. And that was like the worst fuckin' thing I can ever imagine going on between me and Jay.

HJ: The best part about that fight was before you got in the van these guys were saying, 'Yeah, you're right, we never get to do anything but eat.'

SP: I wasn't.

HJ: You were so. Maybe a little bit, like 'It would be nice to do that sometimes.' But as soon as it came out in the open it was [makes chirping noise] crickets. And I'm like, 'Aaawww! Nobody's got my back!'

SP: The only person who seemed to be pissed off about it was you though.

HJ: Yeah.

Was it that you really wanted to go shopping or that you wanted to do something other than eating?

HJ: It wasn't so much shopping, it was just the fact that whenever we got into a town... it was a time thing.

DD: Also, Jay had been trying to buy the perfect gift for a friend of his and wasn't able to get it. Anyway, to get back to the bet, the night after our record release party they had this "Fast, Cheap and Outta Control" night for us [which is a weekly event here in Philly featuring djs playing punk rock and roll records & go-go dancers] and they have these go-go dancers and everything. And because I'm the oldest or whatever...

SP: It's because you're from Boston.

HJ: You're the up-tightest.

DD: And the grumpiest.

SP: The band dad.

DD: The band dad. So there's this custom that band members at this Fast, Cheap and Outta Control night strip down to their underwear and go-go dance. Jay and Steve were just not having it at all. They'd have to be really totally shitfaced drunk to do it.

HJ: Even then I don't think I would.

SSW: No, I don't think I would either.

HJ: I only do that in private.

SSW: Without even joking, I am more modest than that. I will not drop my pants in front of a room full of people.

HJ: Yeah, me neither.

SP: Well that's pretty high and mighty of you.

Not even if you were prepared before, with special underwear?

SSW: I'll walk around the house in my underwear, I'll walk around a motel room. No I meant that, maybe if you knew you were going to take your pants off ahead of time you could find something you felt comfortable in.

SSW: Maybe if I was Angus Young and had red, white and blue American flag shorts.

DD: We forgot our merch that night and Wendy and I went back to the house to get it, and she told me that Jay said if I got up there and danced in my underwear and let him and Steve off the hook, that he would never complain about my dietary habits on the road.

Because somebody had to get up there. Jay, did you say this?

HJ: Yeah.

SP: It's on tape.

DD: So I didn't really care. On one hand, I was like I don't really care but on the other hand—the main deal was another Philly band had their record release the week before, and they went up in their

underwear and danced, and I'm thinking, 'They can't...'

SP: They can't top us.

DD: So I went home and I marked up a pair of boxer shorts with "The 440s" and "Hot To Go" on the back. I had the DJ play "Can't Keep My Eyes On You" [by Johnny Thunders] and me and Wendy got up and danced in our underwear. We dirty danced on a 36-inch in diameter circle.

SP: We almost fell.

DD: We almost fell about eight times. Jay and Steve were really embarrassed to see us do it, I think.

SSW: I was drunk.

Imagine that.

HJ: Yeah, you were pretty drunk.

DD: But a lot of the girls there afterwards, when I was trying to put my clothes back on saying, 'Keep 'em off.'

SP: I wasn't planning on doing it, but I was dressed really well. I had this black slip dress that zipped up the front and a bra and these little short shorts on underneath it. When I came home I had dollar bills and stuff stuck in my underwear.

DD: The best part was after we dropped Jay off, Steve was—again—shitfaced drunk in the back of the van and he goes, 'I'm gonna go every Sunday night!! Let's go there next Sunday, I think I'm gonna do this every Sunday night! This is fun!'

SP: You know what, there was another thing that I just wanted to add to your previous question about on-stage stuff. At the Caboose in North Carolina, which isn't there anymore, this used to happen a lot. I hate this, so any of you who do this, take a cue...

HJ: Oh, I know where this is going.

SP: When people get all crazy and jump around and they knock into the microphone and smash it into my lips and my teeth. It hurts really bad. I've gotten bloody lips from it. So those of you who do that, start being considerate of the bands up there. Especially bands where people play guitar and sing so they can't hold onto the microphone and move it.

[Then the "interview" splits off into three different conversations which made it impossible to transcribe. At one point, Wendy/Sparkle Plenty and I grabbed the tape recorder and said that we wanted to go on the record as saying that there aren't enough good-looking men in straight porn and we demand more of them, which might not be a proper ending to the interview but it makes me laugh everytime I think of it.] ⊕



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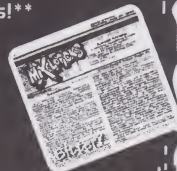
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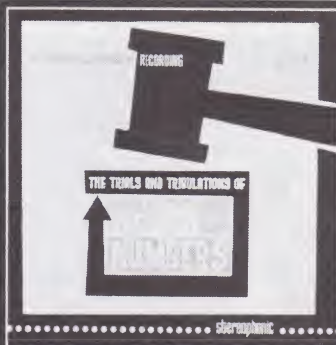
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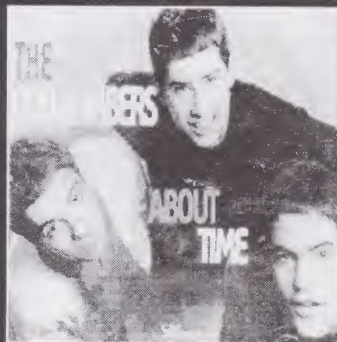


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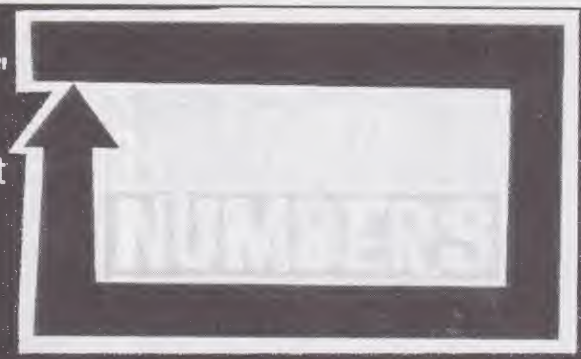


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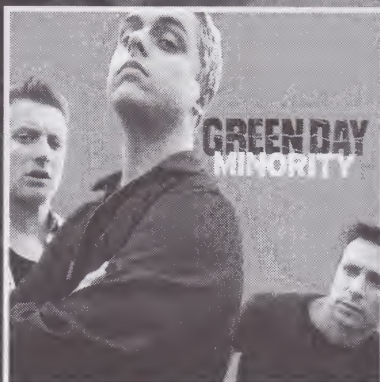
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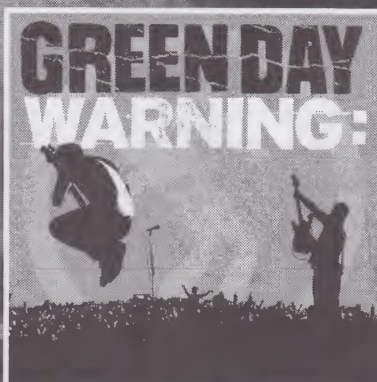


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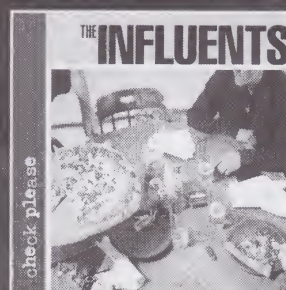
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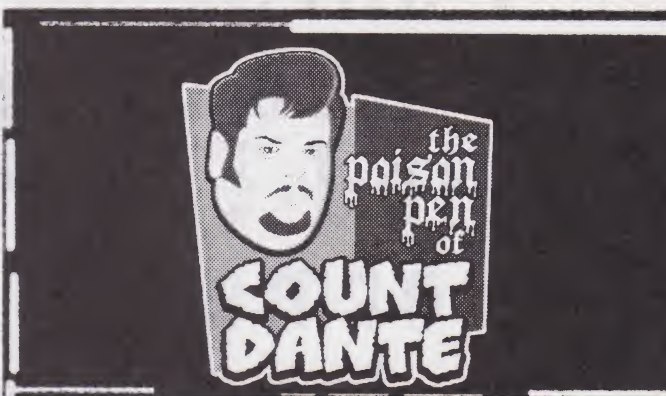
JUNK RECORDS' SHOWCASE OF SLEAZE:

CMJ Showcase at the Fillmore featuring the Dragons, Texas Terri, the B-Movie Rats, the Streetwalkin' Cheetahs, and the Hellbenders, 9/16/2000

Texas Terri, with her bright red-orange hair, cut a menacing figure as she writhed and screamed on stage at the venerable Fillmore in San Francisco. Backed by her band, the Stiff Ones, she unleashed a barrage of punk nastiness on her audience. Her voice was filled with gravel and venom. She ripped off her shirt to reveal that her nipples were covered by electrical tape, making her look like a freaked-out hostage, but she was the one in control and the grand old ballroom was her captive. This venue was once the epicenter of psychedelic musical rebellion in the late 60s, when hippies could still be angry and not just obsessed with granola, sprouts, and New Age mumbo jumbo. Where loud, screaming guitars were once synonymous with the name Fillmore, today the rock and roll rabble-rousing brought on by the Junk Records showcase featuring such unabashed acts as Terri, the Dragons, the B Movie Rats, and the Street Walkin' Cheetahs, seemed in stark contrast to what the place has nowadays become. Like the radicals that used to ingest drugs, experiment with free love, and crank up the echoplex, the aging concert hall has mellowed and sold out with age. The old hippies now live in Marin and make 6-figure salaries, while The Fillmore is part of a gigantic conglomerate that overcharges for tickets, smashes all spontaneity by running shows on a tight schedule, and prefers safe acts like Tom Petty or Sheryl Crow. The musical mayhem brought on by the

assembly of trash rockers on September 16, 2000 was a strychnine-laced acid flashback to the kind of ruckus that put the Fillmore on the map in the first place.

The crowd seemed small in contrast to the expanse of the dance floor, but they were loud and ready to rock. Sure, this show may have been a little misbooked with the Dragons forced to headline in such a big hall, but the city of San Francisco has been hell bent on turning all of its mid-sized venues into office space. One can only wonder how crazed this event would have been had it been held in the tighter confines of the recently



kaput Cocodrie or Transmission Theater - sadly, both clubs have recently been converted into dot com cubicles. But hell, the Dragons rocked, Terri rocked, the Rats rocked, and the Street Walkin' Cheetahs can't help but tear it up no matter what the circumstances.

San Diego's Dragons attacked their set with unrestrained energy. They were headliners, damn it, and they acted like it. Their new album "Rock Like Fuck," combines punk intensity with pop-edged old school rock and roll, and that's what they gave their loyal fans that night. When the punk movement started in the 70s, it dragged rock back into the gutter by returning it to its simpler and trashier roots. That is what the Junk Records roster delivers in spades. Sure, punk purists might cringe at the Motley Crue/LA glam influences that all of these bands display, but to everyone else it's all in the attitude, baby. Every band that took the stage at the Fillmore that night had the swagger and rebellious nature that make both hard rock and punk rock meaningful.

Moments of sheer, unadulterated insanity broke out as the show went on. An underaged girl in a catholic school skirt grabbed Texas Terri and kissed her feverishly, not wanting to let go. Lou Carus, the business suit-wearing impresario behind the Junk records empire of sleaze, watched this unrestrained display of human sexuality with a devilish grin on his bespectacled face. It was moments like this that made running an indie record label all worth it, despite the disappointing gate. Sure, Carus wants to rake in the dough and promote his bands to an ever-expanding audience, but he is also in the business of accelerating our society's moral breakdown, and he delights in this role. Finally, even Terri had had enough of this spontaneous make-out session, and security was forced to pry the Britney Spears wannabe away. "You rock, you fucking rock. I love you." The young redhead in ponytails, arms outstretched towards Terri, pleaded as she was carried off towards the door. It was this kind of spontaneous human combustion that transformed the Fillmore from just another concert hall into an American icon all of those years ago. For a brief moment, the guitar crunch of Junk Records brought it all back. That's the way I want my rock and roll.

THE HANGMEN

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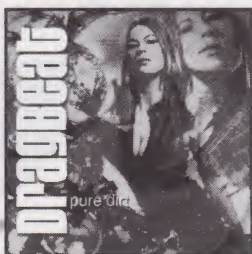
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Wanda Chrome and the Leather Pharaohs: Rockin' Behind The Former Iron Curtain

by Clancy Carroll

M

ilwaukee. A rust belt Midwestern blue collar city that for most people brings to mind beer, bowling, and hard work. What most people may not know is that it has a long history of ties straight back to Europe, as well as a history of breeding great but unknown rock and roll bands. Leaders of the pack are Wanda Chrome and the Leather Pharaohs. The band is made up of Cliff on guitar and vocals, Marie on bass, and new kid in the basement Paul on drums. These guys have been plugging away for years, and if you are of the high energy-garage-rock and roll persuasion you just might love this band. Read on.



WANDA CHROME

AND THE PHAROHS
LEATHER

Clancy: One obvious question for people who may have never heard of you guys or are just now hearing about you; how long has the band been around?

Marie: Nine years. We first got together February 4th...the years are a little fuzzy...I guess it was 1991.

Clancy: Maybe we should get a rundown on your illustrious list of past drummers.

Cliff: There weren't that many of them. Only five. Two of them were like hired guns for tours that we did.

Marie: They were never meant to be part of the band.

Cliff: Our first drummer turned out to be a crackhead, so we had to kick him out of the band. Then we got Joel Besco, who was our drummer for about three years. He couldn't go on the first two tours due to work obligations and such, so we had to bring in a couple of different drummers to do the tours. Joel was our longest running drummer and played on everything that we've recorded up to this point (including the first two albums) except for a couple of compilation tracks that had Rob McCuen

(ex- Plasticland, Liquid Pink) on them. Rob was with us for a short time to do tour number two. After we got back from that tour...

Marie: We killed him...

Cliff: Actually, Rob was in the band before the tour because Joel screwed his hand up or something...

Paul: We should note that Joel did do two tours...

Cliff: That's right. Joel did the third and fourth tours, and at that point he decided to retire from rock and roll. Then the search was on for a new drummer, but it didn't take very long because Beer City Mike told us to check out this guy named Paul New. Paul came over to rehearsal, and it worked out great.

Marie: And he isn't crazy.

Paul: It was a two rehearsal test...

Marie: And he passed the drug test. We made him pee in a cup.

Paul: Actually, something worth noting is that I've tried out for a lot of bands and been around, and these guys have been around a bit, so we went downstairs and probably hammered out ten songs that first night. You kind of know when you can hammer out more than three or four in one

night that this could have some potential, but I wanted to try it out one more time to see if there was some compatibility because these guys have had enough experience to say "sure, he can play and learn these songs but can we go on tour with this guy?", 'cause it's an extremely intimate situation.

Marie: We see each other in our underwear.

Clancy: So how long has Paul been with the band?

Marie: November 15th, 1998. We just had our paper anniversary.

Clancy: Paul, did you drop out of the sky or were there previous combos that you played with before?

Paul: I cut my teeth in the early 80's with the Crusties, played with the Tire Buddies, then with Fuckface, which was an eight-piece band with three drummers. It's kind of interesting that Mike from Beer City sort of hooked me up with Wanda Chrome. He benefitted from getting us together, and I was just thrilled.

Marie: I have to say that we were pleasantly surprised too, because we were thinking about Beer City, there's a lot of skate stuff and all that, and I was kind of worried that some young kid in baggy pants was coming over, and it was so good from the get-go that I was thinking "when is the other shoe going to drop? What's wrong with this guy?" But there's nothing wrong!

Paul: I'm just neurotic...

Clancy: Which is normal...OK, lame-ass

question number two. Can you give us the mandatory influence list? I guess your covers give some of your influences away: the 13th Floor Elevators, the MC5, the Modern Lovers, plus you've got a song about Bo Diddley...

Cliff: The band always gets compared to the Stooges, Ramones, and MC5. Personally, my guitar playing influences are Johnny Thunders, Johnny Ramone, and Keith Richards.

Paul: I'm going to have to say...Emerson, Lake, and Palmer, a 70's band from England. Carl Palmer is an amazing drummer. Even though I've said it in punk interviews for years, I'm gonna say it here: that guy is amazing. And the guy from Devo. I don't know his name. He plays an entire show and doesn't stop.

Clancy: So why did you write a song about Bo Diddley on your first LP?

Cliff: We were screwing around with something at rehearsal, just a few chords, and I said that it should have kind of a Bo Diddley feel to it. Joel asked what the song was about and suggested just writing a few verses about Bo, and then we decided to go into this whole jam thing in the middle and tell everybody about how Bo Diddley influenced all these other people and invented The Beat. Then it evolved into the 10-minute epic that it is today.

Clancy: Has he ever heard it?

Cliff: I don't know for sure, but I did give a tape of it to his roadie, who promised to get it to Bo and returned with an autographed picture of him. I can't say for sure that the man ever heard it, though.

Marie: As a footnote, both Rob and Joel hated that song because it's so long.

Paul: Yeah, it's like getting a new job and how they don't tell you about the bad parts of it up front...

Clancy: For the *Hit List* readers out there, let's talk a bit about your hometown of Milwaukee. Did all of you grow up here?

Marie: I was born here, moved away for about 15 years, and came back. I guess I consider it my hometown. This is where I live.

Cliff: Born and raised here all my life.

Paul: Same here.

Clancy: So what's the best thing about it?

Marie: I think that it's a nice-sized city, there are things to do here, and there's not a whole lot of crime. Every place has

crime, but it's not outrageous here.

Cliff: That's pretty much my opinion, too. It's a big enough city to buy stuff and live, but not on the scale of LA or New York.

Clancy: What's the worst thing about it?

Paul: Winters are brutal and they wear you down. That makes the summers intense though.

Clancy: The real question regarding all this home town stuff is, what does it mean to you as a band?

Marie: Do you really want to open that can of worms? I could say the honest-to-God truth and it will just sound like sour grapes, and I don't want it to be misconstrued that way. But for myself, I live here and there's nothing more than that. If I play here, I do it because I want to. But as far as making a name for myself, no. That's not going to happen. That time has passed.

Clancy: What about your writing?

Marie: A lot of times songs come from the things that you hear here. We never started out to be a "social statement" band or any of that sort of thing, but sometimes that's just how things come out.

Clancy: I thought that your second LP ("Dangerous Times") had a few more rough edges in the lyrics.

Marie: You can't hear about things happening all the time and not end up unleashing some of that anger or anguish in your music.

Cliff: It's not just specifically from living in Milwaukee. For example, "Money, Malt Liquor, and Guns" talks about people that were killed here in town, but the last part of the song about two guys shooting each other up all night happened out in California. The social commentary in the lyrics is more about things that are happening around the country.

Clancy: Shifting gears a little bit, my feeling is that your average person has a severely out-of-whack idea about what it means to be in a band.

All: Yeah.

Clancy: So my question is. How do you pay the bills? Just go on tour a couple of months every year, make a big pile of money, and that's it?

All: (laughter)

Cliff: We all have jobs, we all work our asses off. It's more like we work our asses off so that we can go on tour two months out of the year, not the other way around.

Paul: A good example is that I called my dad to tell him about our upcoming tour, and this is no reflection on my mom and dad, but he thought it was great that I am able to do something that I really like and travel. Then here comes mom asking "so are you making any money on this tour?". It's not about the money. Maybe people are starting to figure some of this out now after reading enough real world hard luck stories about musicians.

Clancy: What's this Funhouse thing?

Cliff: Funhouse Productions is a company that I started, essentially a screen printing company that does T-shirts, bumper stickers, and posters once in a while. I started out just making shirts for a few local bands, and then after I got fired from my last straight job I decided that I'd had enough and I really wanted to work at having my own business and being self-employed, so now that's what I do. That's how I pay the bills. I do work for all kinds of people across the country and in Europe, and it's been going on for about five years now.

Clancy: So far you guys have two albums, a bunch of 45s, and a bunch of compilation tracks. What was your first release?

Marie: It was a "cassingle" that we did around the time of our first tour, back in 1992.

Cliff: It had two songs that we recorded live. After that we had a 4-song live cassette; both of those were super-limited to 50 or 100 copies. The first real thing that we did was the "Werewolf/Jet Black" single on Splunge back in 1993.

Clancy: Your first long player was "Eleven The Hard Way". Why did you decide to make it a live record?

Cliff: I always really liked live records. A lot of my favorite records are live ones, like the first MC5 record. My favorite Jerry Lee Lewis is a live one, and likewise for the Stones and the Ramones. I think there's a whole lot more energy that comes across. Maybe they're not as meticulous as a studio album, but they kick a lot more ass.

Paul: The thing about that record is that people sometimes think about live albums as having the instruments mixed down and that sort of thing. But "Eleven The Hard Way" is not like a big concert hall



“The band always gets compared to the Stooges, Ramones, and MC5.”

recording, it's more "small club live". Everything is right in front of you, so you forget that it is live.

Cliff: We recorded that record at Quarters Rock and Roll Palace in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It holds about 80 people. When it came out we released it on Splunge in the US on 12" vinyl, because we are vinyl fanatics. After it came out I ran into Sonny Vincent (ex-Bob Stinson, Cheetah Chrome bands) at a guitar store. He was in town for a few days and mentioned that he was planning on getting into booking US bands in Europe, as he's been living in Holland for the last few years. He came to one of our shows, we gave him a copy of the record, and two months later, out of the blue, he called us asking if we want to come over and tour Europe. So he set up our first tour and helped swing the deal with Subway Records in Germany, who put out "Eleven" on CD for Europe. Coincidentally, our latest record "Dangerous Times" is out on vinyl on Beer City Records in the US, and is again available on CD in Europe from Subway.

Clancy: The thing about live albums is the disappointment factor, like when you were a kid and listened to "Kiss Alive" and "Live at Budokan" and then found

out 15 years later that everything was overdubbed and punched in.

Marie: It might sound kind of square, but that whole thing is not very honest, you know? It's like adding things to make yourself sound better. I feel that same way about drug use, like amphetamines or cocaine, where you're thinking that you're making yourself sound better. I think that's cheating; you're cheating the audience somewhat.

Clancy: So the first tour coincided with the CD release of your first record. What about the rest of the tours?

Marie: Every tour built on the one before it. We made connections on each one that helped to build for the next one. For example, now when we go to the Balkans we have a woman named Monica that books those shows for us. This person introduces you to that person, and it snowballs.

Cliff: Subway has also booked some of our tours.

Clancy: Tell me about the Balkans.

All: They include Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, former and present Yugoslavia. It's not really Eastern Europe, it's really South Central Europe. It's that part of Europe that starts at Italy and ends at Turkey. On our fifth tour we were originally going to play only in the Balkans, but things started heating up with Kosovo and the Albanians...

Marie: Plus we were in a German van; we could take the van into Croatia but not into Serbia, where we'd have to walk across the border and have someone drive us to shows in the country and later return for the van, that sort of thing. Logistically, it was very difficult.

Cliff: We had a half a dozen shows booked in Serbia and Macedonia, but things got too sticky. We called the State Department,

which told us it was a really bad idea to go there, as the situation was a bit too tense. We still went to Slovenia and Croatia, as well as Austria, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, and Holland. Just as we were leaving the Slovenia/Croatia area, they started dropping bombs.

Paul: We were in Berlin 36 hours after the bombing started, and I was calling my wife to let her know where I was. The phone was cutting out and I was yelling "Berlin, BERLIN" so that she'd know where I was and feel better. All hell had broken loose, but we were safe.

Clancy: I know that you've gotten a ton of great press and reviews from *Hartbeat* and other European magazines, most of which you have to have a friend translate so that you can read. What's up with that? Why is there so much interest in the band over there?

Marie: I don't know.

Cliff: It certainly wasn't anything we set out to do or ever planned on, but I guess that's where we have done a lot of shows...

Marie: And the crowds seem to have an

appreciation for this kind of music, or maybe it's just something different for them. You have to realize that not too long ago many of these countries were Communist and didn't really have the opportunity to see American bands. In some of these places, we were the very first American band that they ever saw.

Clancy: We got some information on Paul's previous bands, but what about Cliff and Marie?

Cliff: Well, I've been in all kinds of bands, but the more notable...no they're not really notable, but the bands that lasted for a while, working backwards include Bedrock, which was sort of a mutation of a band called Nightrider back in 1976 or so. After that I was in the Strays and then I was in the Lucky Stiffs in the early 1980's; we were a skinny tie band.

Clancy: I remember seeing the Strays at a showing of "Rock and Roll High School". I stole your six-pack when you guys took a break!

**We never started out to be a
"social statement" band or any
of that sort of thing, but
sometimes that's just how**

things come out.



Cliff: That's OK, the guys who ran that just kept running across the street and buying more. After the Lucky Stiffs and Bedrock, I did a short stint in Wilderness of Pain and then formed Wanda Chrome. In all that bullshit that I did prior to Wanda Chrome, none of those bands ever released an actual record or played any further out of town than Madison. Nothing ever really happened. When we started Wanda Chrome, it just clicked and all sorts of cool stuff just started to happen.

Marie: I'm the lucky charm!

Clancy: Any previous band experiences that you want to share?

Marie: No. This is my first band. I learned to play bass to be in this band because Cliff needed a bass player. When Cliff started this band after all those years of slugging around, we agreed that it was his band and I would just shut up and play, which is fine.

Cliff: It was more about being agreeable and available. Whereas in previous bands somebody always had an excuse not to do something, with this band if we had an opportunity to do a show in Detroit in a week, Marie and Joel would just say "OK" and do it.

Clancy: Let's talk some more about "Dangerous Times", we talked about some of the influences on it already, but what about the last song "You're Gonna Miss Me"? How long have you been playing that song?

Cliff: I've liked that classic 13th Floor Elevators' song and been trying to get others to play it for like 20 years, but until Wanda Chrome nobody would do it. So I finally got it on wax!

Clancy: What other bands have you guys done shows or tours with?

Cliff: We did a lot of Midwest long weekends with the Trash Brats from Detroit and the Haunting Souls from Dayton.

Marie: We've played with Dumbbell, Wayne Kramer, Marky Ramone, the Pleasure Fuckers, and Nashville Pussy...

Cliff: Deadbolt, Peter and the Test Tube Babies, Jeff Dahl, the Lumbago Surfers...

Marie: Overflow and Don't, which are really good bands from Croatia. It's a pity that they can't get any exposure. Dickey B Hardy and Hic Et Munc are both from Slovenia, and they came over to the US last year. They are really great bands, too.

Clancy: That brings us to your new record that you are working on. Tell me

about the new songs.

Cliff: We got an offer to record an EP for a label in Austria called Pure Vinyl. We had pretty much exhausted our material on the first two records and toured so much that we didn't have any songs left over, so we wrote some new songs that are much more of a group effort than before, as opposed to songs that Joel or I had already written.

Paul: We are going to do an EP, even though we have a full-length's worth of material.

Cliff: That's pretty much the way we've done things in the past; we have had a lot of tracks on these limited edition compilations, and then we've pulled things together for a full-length record when the time is right. It will be "new album time" in the not too distant future.

Paul: Besides, we've been to hell and back, and somehow we have to record that. You have to find the words to describe what it's like to tour and then come back. It changes you. Everything that you do on a close quarters tour, like the ones we've done, affects everyone else. You can't just get drunk and wander off because it causes problems for others. You have to all get along, and then be able to play every night. In America you know what things are like, you know what Cleveland or New York will look like, you can call home when you need to. But overseas no one even speaks your language, and still you're trying to survive and play good shows.

Marie: Especially on the long tours, by week seven it becomes an endurance test. You've spent the last month and a half in a van or in a cold, damp bar waiting to go on. You start to think about the comforts of home. It's really not that glamorous, believe me.

Clancy: So what happens when you do get home?

Marie: I hide.

Paul: The first few days back home I never know what day it is, what time it is, or what I have to do. You lose your sense of where you are.

Cliff: In a sense that's what I really like about touring. It's a completely different reality. I don't have to get up and make T-shirts, I don't have to answer the phone or do all the basic domestic household stuff.

All you really have to worry about is getting in the van and playing.

Marie: That's another thing, though. As an American rock and roll band on tour, every border guard immediately assumes that you have drugs, so they tie you up for at least a half hour and go through all of your personal items. Over here they ask you to

do things, over there they tell you to do things. Stand over here. Stand over there. If you don't like it...tough.

Paul: The best part of it all is the people and families that take you in...

Marie: Oh my God, yes...

Paul: That's what smoothes over the rough spots, when some people take you in and say "now you are going to sit down and eat, drink, and be merry for the next 24 hours", even though they don't have much in the first place. It makes four nights of crummy hotels in big cities all worthwhile when you get to spend time with some family in Croatia where nobody even knows who you are.

Marie: It's about the people...and the homemade hooch!

Cliff: I guess that's the thing, we played in Novisad and Belgrade, which are two of the places that NATO really bombed the shit out of. The rock and roll people in these countries all know each other and work together to put together tours and leave politics totally out of it. So even after US planes have been used to do all this damage, they still want us to come back. We'd love to get back there so that we can hang out with our friends, as soon as the State Department lets us!

Note: Wanda Chrome and the Leather Pharaohs have recently completed their sixth tour, and will soon be releasing a 4-song 7" EP on an Austrian label. +

Contact them at:

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HIT SQUAD



THE PERILS OF ROCK AND ROLL DECADENCE

“Oh, I get chicks, ya motherfucker. Internet chicks. Did you know I fucked a 16-year old Filipino chick? Don't tell anyone though, because that shit's illegal. And I said to her, 'Am I the oldest guy you ever slept with?' And she said, 'No, once I fucked some guy who was like 35'. So I called her a filthy whore.”

-Robin G, Gollum

M: “Our best show was 15-minutes long. Ian introduced for 3 minutes, we played for 12, and they shut us off. Darryl got thrown out of the club, and they wouldn't let him back in. And he's out guitar player.”

SLEAZEGRINDER

I: “People were climbing all over the cigarette machine, trying to get away from the band. Security had Marc in a headlock, and were dragging him out of the club while he was still singing.”

-Ian Adams and Marc Schleicher, Coke Dealer

M: “I had these chicks staying over at my house for the weekend, and we took them up with us when we played in Providence. They saw this other side of me when I was rocking out on stage. I think the big redhead liked it. She was 5'8". She had all the right curves. It was like climbing a tree.

P: Tell him the best part.

M: The other two girls were in the bed with us. What was I gonna do, sleep in my own hallway? All I can say is, the bed smelled like pussy. It was good, man.”

-Mike Cosgrove, Lamont

WHEN NO ONE COOL WILL SAVE YA

“Whenever I turn on the radio, I can't believe people are listening to this horrible shit, never mind buying it. That's why we're gonna save rock and roll's soul. And then we're gonna sell it.”

-Ben, the Strippers

Megadeth's cowardly return to form piss-take, “Kill the King”, was playing on the radio when we totalled the Toyota in front of us. My driver and I average about 6 accidents and 2 sets of airbags a year, so the complete devastation of other peoples' cars have become more of a nuisance than anything else. It usually takes a total of 3 hours before the cops, tow trucks, ambulances, and mobile insurance vultures are done badgering us. Which, unfortunately, gives me plenty of time to dwell on the noise that's constantly leaking out of the van's speakers like some shrill exhaust. I heard “Kill The King” 6 more times before we got moving again.

My radio is gurgling blood. It has been for years. I'm sure there are unheralded treasures awaiting the thirsty ear left of the dial in the land of college radio, with its fumbling, stoned DJ's and its lofty freeform ideas. But I can't get those stations in my van. They are lost in the low frequency ghetto of ghostly static and Jesus speak, and I am left with 45 hours of commercial rock radio a week to slog through. My day job keeps me on the road with the Downtown Circus Gang in a 4-wheeled orange metal casket, and we spend all day punching back and forth from the 3 major FM rock radio stations, fruitlessly searching for just one good fucking song to break up the monotony. I'd bet that some people in smaller media markets than Boston would think I'd be happy to have a triple dose of Nü rock clogging up the airwaves 24 hours a day, but that's like a starving man expecting me to be grateful for having 3 bowls of poisoned apple sauce.

The once authentic “Rock of Boston” simply stole its competitors' playlists during the grunge era, ditched the Zep records, and presented the same bait & switch “alternative” concept as everybody else, they just did it louder. They litter the day with charmless fratboys who belabor the old strippers and lesbians routine mercilessly and attempt to pawn off horrid rap metal as cutting edge rock'n'roll.

A little to the right is the “Real Rock” station, which simply substitutes loudmouth drunks for the fratboys. The format is exactly the same, only they keep the Zep. In the middle is the college baiting “Real Alternative” (cough) station. Same songs, Eminem instead of Zep, 20-something cyber creeps that talk of the genius of scam artists like Moby...

The one thing that all 3 station seem to agree on is that Limp Bizkit needs to be played once every 17 minutes. It's no wonder the “kids” are such dorks.

The real reason that Fred Durst and company rule the roost these days is because Kurt Cobain was too much of a pussy to defend his woman. Allow me to explain. Always the media whore, at the dawn

of the last decade, Courtney Love could already smell the mountains of cash awaiting the heroes of grunge. But first, the old guard, with their bad attitudes and sex, drugs, and rocknroll cliches had to be dismissed. So she started shooting her big mouth off to whomever would listen that Guns'n'Roses were nothing but bloated, power-tripping ego stars. A claim with which no one was even arguing. But not surprisingly, it still rankled Axl Rose enough to corner the two Alternarock revolutionaries backstage at the Grammy awards in 1991. “Listen, man” Axl, said to Kurt, “you better tell your bitch to shut up, or you and I are gonna take it out to the parking lot.” Kurt looked at Courtney, and with a greasy smirk

**Megadeth's cowardly return
to form piss-take, “Kill the
King”, was playing on the
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Toyota in front of us.**

said, "Shut up, bitch." And then they walked away.

And it was all over, man. Suddenly, whiskey bottles and mood swings, motorcycles and cocaine, tattoos and bar brawls, it was all Easy Rider cliché. Comic book cowboy tall tales for a lost generation. Now it was cool to be sad and lazy and craven. Perfectly all right to show up in ragged flannel and carve out discordant love songs for a new breed with nothing to prove or to say. Even walking away from a righteous fistfight was ok. Rock might not have been dead, but it sure wasn't breathing too easy.

Meanwhile, all the alpha male jocks were content to live out their date rape fantasies with a throbbing gangsta rap soundtrack, but when they scoped the musical frontiers, they found there were no longer any leather-bound rock and roll motherfuckers left to sneer at their goony haircuts and strip mall lifestyles, and they walked right into the electric church and started tearing out the pews to make room for mosh pits. And now, 10 years later, teenage girls get raped at Woodstock and Disturbed are on the radio for the 12th time this morning. Thank you very fucking much, Kurt.

I don't think I'd even care if the radio didn't insist on calling this stuff Rock, when it's so obviously an alien organism. The penultimate example of Anti-rock has got to be "Broken Home", the incessantly played single by Papa Roach. Forget the fact that musically, it's strikingly generic aggro-rap metal. It's the lyrics that take the cake. "I know my mother loves me, but does my father even care? When I was sad or angry, you were never ever there." Yikes. Now compare that to a line from the Guns song that this column was named after, "Bad Obsessions": "I call my mother, but she's just a cunt now, says I'm sick in the brain." See the difference? Keep in mind that, as of this writing, Papa Roach are crawling over the cover of those vanguards of the new sound, *Spin* magazine. Kind of makes me truly appreciate something as honest and hip as *Hit List*. All I really know is that if they played more Swedish rock and roll on the radio, I'd get my dick sucked alot more often.

A NIGHT ON IRON WITCH MOUNTAIN: THE SWAMP WITCH REVIVAL STORY

"Suddenly, we noticed barnyard cocks beginning a bitter fight just in front of the door. We chose to watch."

-St. Augustine, 'De Ordine'

So, what's it take to be in Swamp Witch Revival anyway?
"A beard helps."

-Rubin, vocals

Things in Maine just ain't like they are here, city baby. Bubbling moonshine stills blowing gaskets and spooking the hoot owls. Coondogs

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spitting out catfish bones and scratching at bald spots behind their ears. Raw country gods like burly chieftains in a muddy realm of rust and scrap metal, wielding lug wrenches like sceptres. Dinner that runs around on 4 legs hours before being eaten. Impossibly pretty rural vixens that steal kisses without asking. Motorcycles, not SUV's. Handshakes, not written contracts. Rock and roll, not that bullshit they play on the radio.

Swamp Witch Revival blew into my personal Babylon of Boston on Hallow's Eve, courtesy the chaos-baiting Rock City Crimewave, and proceeded to tear the unexpecting measly rock club asunder like Northern Baptists with the devil chewing on their necks. Tambourines and handclaps, leather pants and cowboy hats, the Revival was a ramshackle barrage of shotgun waving, cock fighting, cat clubbing

excitement, backwoods Hellhounds drinking, fighting, and fucking their way to Heaven with their boots on and their valor and pride intact.

The noise they made was that of fighting men, a proto-stoner stew of sludge and chrome laced with snakebite induced spells of psychedelic gospel, a death or glory racket that could easily trade punches or flask slugs with Roadsaw or Alabama Thunderpussy, with the added bonus of two stunning back-up singers - kittens with claws, unspoiled beauty with leather lungs. Swamp

Witch Revival have arrived to drag rock and roll back to it's primal roots of fun and frolic, sin and redemption, magic and madness.

The men and ladies that make it all happen: Rubin Little, vocals; Tony D'Agostino, guitar; Angus Macfarland, guitar; Fred Dodge, bass; Gregg, drums; Gina Branch & Sarah Cogshall, vocals.

SG: So is there really a Swamp Witch?

G: Yeh, it's from a Russian fairy tale, but that's not how we got the name. Tony was coming back from Georgia after all the hurricanes they had and there was all this black, bubbling water. I don't know, he must've been listening to BTO or something, because he said, "there it is, the new band....Swamp Witch." Later on, we added the Revival, because it gave us something to live up to.

SG: How did you all get together?

G: Tony, Rubin and I played in a band called Fury 440. We were a fucked-up 50's rock and roll band. We were together for a couple of years and then we reformed as Swamp Witch when Angus joined up a year and a half ago.

Angus: I used to play in a metal band called the Studs, we were a real low end, horrible, necro-metal kind of band, so I have alot of that left over.

Rubin: The beauty of the band is that we all have different musical interests, but we all meet in the middle. Personally, all I listen to is 60's and 70's hard rock and metal, and everybody else does as well, but

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Greg's more into punk, Angus likes black metal...

SG: So when did the girls show up?

R: About 6 months ago. It was an idea that Angus and I had. It's an idea

everybody has, really, y'know, "Now we're gonna get some back-up singers!", but it just so happens that after the first show we did, there were these girls that were friends of ours there, and I was all drunk, and I said "You two fine ladies is gonna sing back-ups for us!", and sure enough, they said OK. Next sunday they showed up for practice, and that was it.

Sara: People are always referring to us as the Go-Go dancers, but we're the SINGERS. I just want to make that clear. My only hope for this band is that it helps me in my plan to become the most poewrful person in the world. That's my only statement at this time.

SG: Right on. So, how would you describe the music of Swamp Witch? I used "The Black Crowes being eaten by surly lumberjacks".

R: That's pretty good. People have called us "sludge rock heroes", "white trash anthem rock".

G: I just get sick of hearing "stoner rock", or "stoner-core", because I don't even know what that is. We play rock and roll, man.

SG: What's it like playing rock in Portland, Maine?

R: People out here hold their nights out and their music precious. Everybody goes crazy and has a good time.

SG: Seems like, when you played in Boston, you expected more audience participation.

R: Demanded it, in fact. What's the sense of being there if you're not going to have fun? Maybe they get into it in different ways, but we're used to a more intimate experience.

G: Life is harder here. Music isn't a means to an end, we just do it because we love it.

SG: So what's a good audience reaction?

R: A lot of dancing, yelling, getting on stage - we have an open stage policy, pretty much. Just do whatever whatever makes you happy.

G: We do festivals in the woods up north during summer. People with farms and stages in the middle of them, people come out of the nooks and the valleys and have a blast.

SG: That sounds so cool.

R: In late spring, probably in June, we're gonna put together our own festival at this guy Aaron Fuda's place. He's got a commune, and he's offered to let us use his land for the Swamp Witch Weekend Revival. Camping, fires, no law. Everyone has a good time, gets high, gets drunk, barbeques...there's dogs and kids running around, chickens...bring toilet paper.

SG: Word on the street is that Swamp Witch is down with the bikers.

R: We have a lot of dedicated fans in the area, mountain men and whatnot. Some of them are bikers. They come around on short notice to see us. It started with one, now it's like 10 or 12 at every show, hopefully more to come. They're cool people.

SG: So what do you think would have happened if Swamp Witch played Altamont?

G: Well, our bikers aren't really headbreakers. Unless you piss them off.

R: For one thing, there would've been more people there. And there would've been a bigger vibe of love.

SG: Tell me about your night in Boston, and your party with Rock City Crimewave.



R: Me and Angus and Greg are like a roving band of drunkards. Our bouts with drinking are so legendary that nothing seems out of the ordinary.

G: So after the show, we partied with them. We haven't heard from them since.

R: We had a great time, though. We had a lot of wine and a lot of beer, and a lot of our supporters were there. They were already sleeping in Crimewave's rehearsal space, and in the space hallway, so it was hard for us to leave.

We proceeded to find some firecrackers that

were kicking around, and we were throwing them at this kid who comes to all our shows, blowing them off in his fingers and in the space. And we're drinking, and taking turns sitting in each other's laps and doing jigs, and then we proceeded to ogle and offend all the females that were around. Well, except for our singers, they ogled and offended all the males. See, when you're in Swamp Witch, you see what you want, and you take it. We're very powerful people.

Dancing naked in the fire, cheating the devil and the grave but never a brother or sister, Rock and Roll's great redeemers are going into the studio in January to record their first album. And then the revolution starts. (If you want to contact Swamp Witch Revival, I will forward your messages. They don't have much call for the clickey clack of pussy computers in Portland.)

SLEAZY ROCK JOURNALISM ÜBER ALLES

"I'm going to go back to New York and kill myself so that you guys can become rich and famous rock stars."

-Lester Bangs

If you're in a band, and you want live the Nash Kato sort of Rock Star lifestyle, where you watch soap operas all day and attend parties on hotel roofs with Neil Diamond, all on the record label's tab, well you can just forget it. Even if you really had a snowball's chance, home technology and the internet's great levelling of the industry and the subsequent slashing of the major label's Achilles Heel, basically means you're keeping your day job. You'll keep scooping ice cream until you're 40, when you'll die. But that's always been part of rock and roll's Faustian bargain. But there's still a chance for me to flick cigarettes at the squares from a park bench on Monday mornings. If I don't mind wiping the

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occasional glob of semen from my lips, that is. Given the unending tidal wave of mediocre rock product flooding the market like Japanese fuck funnies these days - The Valentine Killers? Are you kidding me? - SOMEBODY's gotta crank the dials on the hype machine in orderly fashion. So the market for halfwitted sentence slingers has gone through the roof. Of course, those goddamn razor scooters are flying off the shelves as well, so you can see why I wish I could bang a nail straight, or something useful like that.

We will soon be deluged with so many people lying to us about rock'n'roll that we will pine for the days when we gleaned our rock info from the xeroxed, typewritten, glue-sticked pages of honest-to-God fanzines with no affiliation with anybody but their own fevered brain and the 25 people that believed in them. Guys like Al Quint, with his relentless pursuit of that Godawful boy-crazy suburban thrash, and JD Monroe, whose epic tales of soul, glitter, and sin would inevitably deteriorate into hissing rants on the state of his distress; flawed characters, to be sure, but rock solid, death-or-glory gatekeepers of the rock kingdom with finely-honed bullshit detectors armed and ready to expose the frauds and celebrate authenticity. Nowadays, I've got some anonymous fucker on a website that's savvy enough to namedrop Circus of Power when reviewing American Pearl, even though it's just not true. And I go and spend 8 bucks on a lightweight Junkyard clone that's on tour with Creed.

See, Al Quint's never gonna sell out. He's not gonna tell you that the Goo Goo Dolls have punk cred...well, OK, sometimes he's a misguided goofball, but he's never gonna fucking lie to you. But he writes for *Hit List*, not *Rolling Stone*, and despite the fact that we all know what the greatest rock and roll magazine in America really is, the kids that actually need his kind of passion and pathos ain't getting it. Because nobody around here is sleazy enough to slither under the backdoors of the Big Boys and hand them their ass when the revolution is on. Well, except maybe for me. I'd take a paycheck from a magazine I actually admire, like *Outlaw Biker* or *Barely Legal*, anyday.

The newstands are clogged with hundreds of fly-by-night magazines extolling the virtues of bands you know damn well suck. As Grand Funk once said, "There's a lot of people out there that are gonna tell you that they're your brother or your sister, but they're not. And you gotta watch out for them." So until the true believers are once again given the forum to tell the truth about rock and roll, ignore all that phony rock journalism. And if you see me saying something like, "No really, the new Offspring is actually pretty good", then you know I've been cloned, so feel free to shoot me.

IS EATING PUSSY COUNTERCULTURAL? THE STRIPPERS STORY

"You know what's really attractive about women? When you know they're gonna leave in a couple of weeks."

-Mr. Fantastic

Imagine the greasy drug punks that renegade celluloid outlaw Abel Ferrara would've hired had he needed authentic shock'n'rollers for some apocalyptic denouement in "The Bad Lieutenant", the lost scene where Harvey Keitel shoots the noisy bastards in their heads at the Puerto Rican

pinball arcade they practice in, because he just can't take that ungodly racket anymore. That'd be the Strippers.

Formed in a mudhole back in '96 in their feathery hometown, Sapphic-heavy Northampton Ma., the Strippers have slowly risen to the status of local Anti-Christ with their peanut butter smearing, bottle smashing, danger hound stage show, and a howling, post-everything take on Sleaze Rock - half trucker metal, half danger punk, all red, white and bruised American hard raunch. With loose but winking ties to porn and crime and outlaw biker gangs, the Strippers have already managed to fuck every girl and smash every mailbox in their side of town - hammerhead sharks in a duck pond. With a new record due out in spring of 2001, these feral children of suburbia are hungry for big city meat. Lock up your daughters...

The Strippers: Ben, Bass; Mr. Fantastic, Guitar, vox; Buddy Holiday, drums



Belchertown, and got a gig by accident. And then proceeded to write songs for this gig.

SG: Accident?

B: Mr. Fantastic's girlfriend was working in a bowling alley and the band that was gonna play dropped out, and she volunteered us for the gig. It was a 3-hour gig, and we never played before, so obviously we took it. We wrote 40 minutes for this 3-hour show, and we just played it over and over again.

SG: That had to be a nightmare.

F: Naw, we just got drunker, the audience got drunker, and it was a whole new show again.

B: Then we didn't really do anything for two years except write really bad songs in our mudroom.

SG: Mudroom?

F: We practiced in an unheated room, a mudroom, in the middle of winter. So, we drank alot. We practiced with our jackets on and sang into microphones duct-taped to broomsticks. So our sound grew from being in this horrible place for so long.

B: It was in this rotting little basement in this house that Fantastic lived in. Beer bottles and moth-eaten couches everywhere. It was such a nasty place. No matter what time of day it was, it was always pitch black. We started calling it the Hell Motel.

F: There was always this weird stink in there, like one time a mouse had crawled into a bottle and died and rotted. It made it kind of uncomfortable

to practice in there for a couple of weeks.

B: So we went on this hunt to find the smell and we sniffed literally hundreds of bottles, until I hear this dry heaving in the corner, and this bottle goes flying into the air with this half-putrified mouse in it.

SG: Nice. Given your success, you must have moved onto plusher surroundings.

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B: Not really. We moved to another town, but it's pretty much the same thing. We find it easier to write in dark, trashy holes.

SG: Last year you released your first record, "The Strippers At the Hell Motel"...



F: We ripped off that album in 3 days and with two gallons of Jack Daniels. We hammered it out over 12-hour days, and the lyrics are completely different from when we wrote them, because we had consumed so much whiskey we'd completely forgotten them. so we had to make up new ones as we went along.

SG: What's the song "MotherReagan Sleazeball" about?

F: That used to be three songs, but we jammed them all together. It's kind of like a rock opera, if you will. It's about how, when you're a kid and you want to screw your girlfriend, but your mom won't let you out. And then you move on, and you meet these chicks with dead eyes, you know black and vacant. Just like Reagan's. And the Sleazeball part is about the sleazy motherfuckers that try to steal your girlfriend, who've got the gold chains, and they're macking around, but really they're just a sleazeball. I mean, I've got nothing against sleazeballs, really. Occasionally, I can be pegged as one.

SG: The Strippers van, I've noticed, is actually a school bus.

B: Yeh, the short bus. I had a mail truck to haul our equipment in originally, but it was killing too many brain cells. The exhaust fumes were pouring in, and we couldn't handle it anymore. So I was looking for a handicapped van, because we could use that electric lift for the equipment, right? So I found the bus. It's perfect, the cops never bother us.

SG: But is it good for your image, driving around in the retarded kids' bus?

B: I get a lot of shit for it, to tell you the truth. People make fun of us for driving in the short bus, but after the show, where do you think they go to party? The short bus.

SG: It's kind of hard to peg down The Strippers' influences...

F: You know what my influence is? The Pain. I think it's more of a theoretical thing - you know when a band writes a really good record and you say, "these guys are really going thorough some shit?" That's The Pain. It's like "The Force", only it's the Bad Force.

SG: So you channel the same energies as Axl Rose...

F: No. I'm not crazy, man. Although last year, I did have to tell a million people that I wasn't a heroin addict. I had to go to rehab because I got in trouble. People were going. "You ok? You off the drugs?" It was nothing, though, just this dumbass thing I had to do.

SG: What?!

B: He got arrested speeding through Easthampton with no lights on, completely stoned.

F: Awww, you're gonna make me sound like an idiot. Yeh, it was the second time, so to avoid losing my liscence or going to jail, I went "I have a problem, I need to go to rehab."

B: And when he got out, we took a field trip to AA. We heard all these weird stories and decided not to go back. And then we headed straight for the bar.

SG: You're aware that there are other Strippers out there, right? Highway Strippers, Sunset Strippers, Gaza Strippers...

B: Yeh, but they probably don't care. I think we were the first anyway.

F: We were drinking these half gallons of micro brew trying to think of a sleazy, trashy name because we were gonna play in a bowling alley.

B: Because of our name, we always get one weird pimp guy coming in. You can tell that he's not there for the music, he's got like two ho's with him, like some 70-year old Cuban guy with nasty chicks.

SG: But do the Strippers know any strippers?

F: Oh yeh. My old girlfriend used to work for strippers in this place called Mardi Gras.

B: She was an advocate for strippers.

F: Yeh. I had a girlfriend that actually wanted to go to strip clubs, because she did their hair. And then she'd bring them to see us, which was always a plus.

SG: It would be cool to have strippers performing while the Strippers are performing.

F: That's what we're shooting for. We practice like two miles away from this ratty strip club, and that's the kind of strippers we want. Small time, amateur, club foot, bucktooth Betties.

SG: Your stage show is uh..lively. To say the least.

B: We all work shitty blue collar day jobs all week long, so when we play live, we really let it fly. I mean we rarely get paid, and when we do, it never even covers the bar tab, so it's all about the performance. But they don't even know how to handle the rock around here. We played this Northampton music festival, and we opened the show with a chainsaw.

SG: Just like Jackyl.

B: No. Not like Jackyl. It was friday the 13th. These guys were already onstage jamming, and I came flying through the club and onto the stage with this chainsaw blazing with overalls and a Jason mask on. The exhaust smoke was so thick it was choking people in the audience. That was a great show.

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F: We played in the basement of this old club, and beforehand, I drank too many beers and did too many drugs. I really didn't have my senses about me. Long story short, I electrocuted myself. I used to have this lamp attached to my mic stand, and it shocked me and killed my amp. Ben was pissed, he threw down his bass and walked out, and the drummer, we fished him out of a garbage can last night, that's why he's not here today, by the way...

B: He always wanders off after the show and passes out in hedges. We find him the next day with twigs in his hair, and we have to help him find his car.

F: They both left me and went outside, and had a fistfight. I stayed and played some sappy song for like 20 minutes, by myself. People were looking at me, going, "What are you doing? Just go home!" I was all bloody. It was great.

B: We had a bartender that wanted to kill us, once. We were playing at this place called the Bay State, and we were playing last, and they're pretty adamant about stopping the bands at 1 AM, cuz that's when the bar closes. Well, we weren't done yet. So the bartender comes over and starts ripping wires out of anything he can find, so we had no PA, but the amps were still going and so we finished our set with just noise, and we destroyed the set and smashed the mannequin to dust and left it for him to clean up.

F: That was a mannequin?

B: Then there was the greyhounds show. Are you familiar with Mt. Holyoke College?

SG: Not at all.

F: It's this really rich all-girl's school.

SG: I like it already.

F: They posted on the internet that they were looking for bands to play this benefit to save the greyhounds. We said we'd do it, and when they found out who we were, they made us sign this 6-page contract promising that we wouldn't bring any alcohol or break anything.

B: We were the only band that had to sign it.

F: Yep. We were on the bill with all these hippy bands.

B: We were gonna leave because this jam band was going on and on, but we finally made it onstage, and Mr. Fantastic starts talking about how he's gonna eat these greyhounds. All these benefit supporters were standing there with their jaws dropped.

F: The look on their faces when I said I was gonna eat their fucking dogs! So we played the set to these deer-in-the-headlights stares, and then we trashed the stage and went home.

SG: It must have been fun loading up that night.

B: We were trying to do it as quickly as possible, because there were these militant lesbian cheerleaders...

F: Oh yeh, they were doing the "Vegetarian Cheer".

B: We had to blaze out of there with these rich lesbians chasing us. Did you know that our hometown is the lesbian capital of the country?

SG: I don't know if that's good or bad.

B: It's got its advantages. Smith is this other all-girls school mostly filled with lesbians, but the ones that aren't are these hyper, undersexed, frustrated chicks...

F: So it's fun hanging out at the dorms.

B: Some Smith girls have publicly stated that it's their goal to sleep with the Strippers. So one night they were slumming at this bar we hang out in, Hugo's, a nasty place where the smoke is so thick you

can't see from one side of the place to the other, and they said, "We have a full keg of beer at our dorm," and this was at last call, so they won us over.

F: It doesn't take much.



B: They took turns mauling Mr. Fantastic.

F: I don't know, I got fish-lipped by a bunch of girls, but it's never the pretty ones.

B: The night ended with us falling down a flight of stairs with the faucets from their bathroom sinks in our pockets.

SG: So the Strippers are obviously not just a goddamn rock band for you guys, it's a lifestyle.

F: Yeh, I'm a lifer. I was gonna move to California with this chick last year, but I couldn't leave the rock. She didn't understand. She left me, and broke my heart.

SG: She just didn't get the evil powers of rock and roll.

F: No. She said she didn't want to be like Yoko Ono. So I said, "All right. See you later."

The Strippers can be reached at www.thestrippers.com

NEW FEAR'S EVIL

As I write this, there are only 15 minutes left to the year 2000. Good riddance. For what it's worth, here's my top 5 of last year:

1. Roadsaw - "Rawk & Roll"
2. Gluecifer - "Tender is the Savage"
3. Black Label Society - "Stronger than Death"
4. C.O.C. - "America's Volume Dealer"
5. The Hangmen - "Metallic IOU"

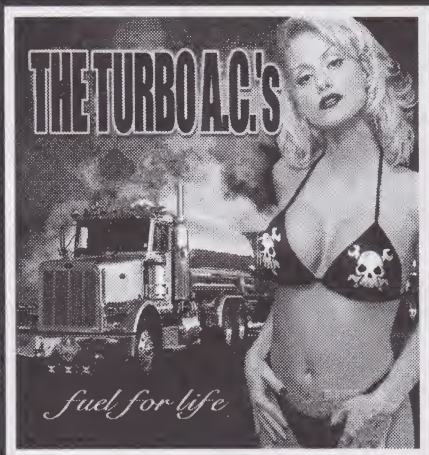
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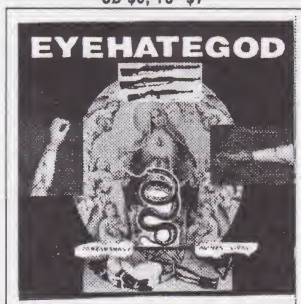
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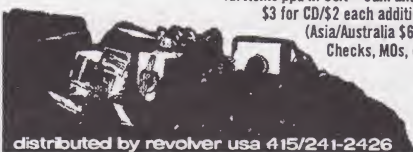


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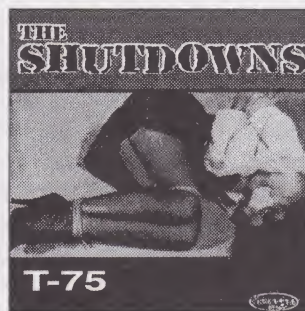
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Universities are ostensibly places where people can go and learn about the world. Their isolation from what is often called "the real world" exists precisely for this purpose — the accumulation of *Geist*. The university is allegedly a refuge for unconventional ideas, open debate, and freedom to disagree. Professors supposedly exist to facilitate this ideal. The purpose of the professor is to impart the wisdom that he has accumulated over the years to his students, as objectively as possible, so that they may go forth and do the same years down the road and thereby become a credit rather than a detriment to their society.

If you've started laughing at me, it's because you already know that this is total horseshit. The university is largely dominated by ideas that were unconventional thirty or forty years ago and have now turned into a sort of intellectual (if you can call it that) *status quo*. Marxism, Freudian psychology, and bizarre strains of "postmodernist" (or "deconstructionist" or "post-structuralist" — it really doesn't matter what their devotees are calling it themselves this week, as it's always more or less the same) thought derived from the same aforementioned theories are the order of the day. Anyone who doesn't tow the orthodox leftist line in class is subject to slander and ridicule, either through conventional means (labeling the witch as a "racist", "sexist", "heterosexist", or the dreaded "privileged") or by extraordinary means.

I myself have been called many of these very names. When I suggested that a high school diploma was too easy to attain, a fellow student brushed my opinion aside as "an attitude of privilege" without making any sort of attempt to justify this claim — indeed any attempt to do so would fall flat, as I come from a relatively poor post-industrial suburb and am the son of a construction worker and a schoolteacher, two professions which are by no means associated with the "Brahmin" caste. When I challenged this and asked for some sort of substantiation for her claim, another student then attacked me as a "racist" and told me that if I "took that thing [referring to my labret piercing] out of [my face]," I "could be the most right-wing Republican out there." Of course, it never even occurred to her that I might in fact hold a great many right-wing ideas or that I would make an effort to defend these to her.

Read the above paragraph again. My responses all called for substantiation of the claims being made, and I further demanded evidence that any of this mattered. I did not classify the first student's opinion as "dykish" (she was in fact a lesbian who thought that her being gay excused her from jury duty on a case of alleged gay bashing, further adding to my argument that the American jury system is inherently flawed), nor did I classify the second student's opinion as being that of a "nigger bitch". Had I done either of these things I would be taken to task in a most severe manner by all of the students present, not to mention by the professor, and perhaps even some sort of disciplinary action would have been taken.

Any students who had criticized the (fictitious) epithets I used

above as being blatantly prejudiced in ways that were completely inconsequential in the context of the discussion, as well as for using inappropriate invectives, would have been completely justified.. A person who can think of nothing better to say about the opinion of a lesbian or a black woman than that it is a "dykish" or "nigger bitch" opinion is self-evidently a twit whose lack of intelligence warrants a good intellectual tongue-lashing. Such a person would also be completely unworthy of any sort of academic or intellectual respect.

Bearing this in mind I urge readers to re-examine the paragraph in which I described the actual responses of classmates to my criticisms of American secondary education. The retorts to what I regarded as substantive criticisms were no more high-



brow and no less pejorative and prejudiced than if I had actually used the aforementioned invectives against my fellow classmates. Yet one type of personal invective is tolerated in academia, whereas the other isn't. Since I have already written about the extraordinary means used to slander me in less interesting magazines, which no doubt would support the ridiculous non-arguments of the people I mentioned above, at this point I feel no need to go on at length about this subject again.

A word of advice to my fellow twenty-somethings — avoid any organization which has the words "national", "people's", or "campaign" in its title.

Now for something not-so-completely different. It was a spring afternoon and I was leaving my last class of the day. While walking by the Student Union, I noticed a large crowd forming outside. It was then that I remembered that the UMass Republican Club was holding a Mumia Abu-Jamal "speak-out" of a different kind. The Republican Club had decided (in what I thought was a total stroke of brilliance) that, since so many college students had taken

up the banner of convicted (and the word "convicted" can't be stressed enough) murderer Mumia Abu-Jamal after reading entirely one-sided propaganda put out by such dubious sources as the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) or the Workers' World Party (WWP)-dominated "National People's Campaign" (a word of advice to my fellow twenty-somethings — avoid any organization which has the words "national", "people's", or "campaign" in its title), a sort of intellectual "bending of the stick" was necessary. I must confess that



I laughed out loud when I saw flyers around campus that said "Fry Mumia!", and I think that presenting the less-heard side is never a bad thing since people can then hear it for themselves and decide what they think. So I decided to attend the rally.

Campus radicals are not so interested in free-speech, however. Approximately 200 campus leftists of varying stripes (some were associated with the bizarre Maoist Internationalist Movement [MIM], some were associated with the ultra-violent International Socialist Organization [ISO], and some were associated with local groups which no doubt had words like "Freedom", "Peace", "Justice", "Coalition" and "Campaign" in their title) gathered at the protest. They were banging drums, holding up banners in front of the speakers, shouting speakers down, and using other tactics worthy of Nazi bootboys.

After the Republican-sponsored rally ended, I was chased up two flights of stairs by a mob of campus activists and finally managed to find a safe refuge in — of all places — the Republican Club's own office. The Republicans at first wondered what the hell a weirdo like me was doing in there, but a friend from the club recognized me and after I said that I'd voted for Forbes I was not suspected of being some sort of enemy agent. When the protesters began trying to break the door down, someone from the next door office of MassPIRG (one of Ralph Nader's financial vampires) said that he "didn't blame" the protesters and wished that he was out there with them. For those unfamiliar with what goes on on campus these days, this tale may already be enough to make your head spin, but it didn't end there.

After we were freed from our cage by a phalanx of police officers, me and my friend Mike headed down the stairs and went outside, where we attempted to engage the protesters in serious debate. I never said I wasn't a troublemaker! What I found really striking was that almost none of them would admit that things had gotten a little out of hand. I couldn't see what the Republicans had done wrong, except maybe display the utter lack of tact and sensitivity that is so common in politics today. The protesters were livid. I was a "racist". Mike was a "racist". We were both "rich" (as if that is some sort of an insult in and of itself). Abraham Lincoln was a gay racist (I didn't understand that either). One protester explained to me that a "final solution" was now underway to exterminate blacks in America. (Gee, I wonder if German kids in the late 30s walked around wearing the garb of rabbis and listening to bar mitzvah music in their spare time, all the while watching films based on the Torah). Another told me that she didn't understand why I thought that objective information was so important. A student (and "veteran of the Battle of Seattle") who I had previously taken a political theory course with called me a "racist" and claimed that the Republican Party had started the KKK (a glaring historical falsehood if there ever was one). Finally, one protester asked if I would be offended if someone drew swastikas and the words "Heil Hitler" on posters and put them up around campus. When I began my answer with the word "yes", he immediately said "OK, then" and cut me off, as if the mere fact of being offended by an image or idea was grounds for its complete suppression. It wouldn't actually offend me, but he didn't let me get that part out.

A few of the protesters that I talked to afterwards understood that something had gone horribly wrong, but they were largely in the minority. The general mood was that a "victory" had been won by the protesters and that free speech had prevailed. This same sort of Orwellian logic — that psychological (and indeed even physical) terror are part and parcel of "free speech" — was also evident a few

weeks earlier when a meek group of Communist Party and ISO members attempted to "shut down" Oliver North's speech at UMass. I never thought I would find myself commiserating with a John Bircher until that day came.

I don't really think that there's much of a difference between the first story about Nick in the classroom and the second story about Nick at the protest. The only difference lies in the numbers involved. Two people both felt perfectly comfortable verbally attacking me in the classroom with all sorts of empty slurs for uttering "thought crimes", whereas two hundred people together felt comfortable physically attacking me and chasing me up a flight of stairs simply for the "crime" of being in attendance at an unpopular campus rally. The sad thing is that I saw a lot of people who were my friends at that rally, and I ended up losing a lot of respect for a lot of people that day.

The point is that quasi-fascist cadres for the new millennium are being bred today on the grounds of our nation's universities. This may sound like a ludicrous claim, but I truly fear that it is not. I printed out some literature from a "third positionist" group, the American Front, and showed it to some leftist friends of mine without telling them that the AF were die-hard Strasserites. The responses I got were almost identical to those I had often gotten back in my leftist days, when I was handing out similar literature for the Spartacist League — "I agree with what they're saying, I just don't really know if it's possible to achieve their ideals." A chill went down my spine every time I heard people that I considered to be worthy friends now likewise describing fascist propaganda as being "too idealistic".

Surely there's a leap between being "duped" into agreeing with fascist propaganda and actually becoming an active fascist, but I don't think it's a leap that most people are incapable of making. The thing that keeps people from becoming a fascist or a communist or whatever (the two are really not all that different from each other, or from other authoritarian and plebeian ideologies) is the question of numbers. The mentality of an authoritarian exists inside almost everyone. The desire to silence unpopular opinions. A drive to intimidate those who disagree with you. What starts with meaningless insults ("privileged") and then moves slowly toward downright slander ("child-molester"), soon creeps into blatant intimidation ("shut it down"), and finally ends up as naked physical aggression ("stone the witch" or, perhaps, "kill the elitist").

You can see the future of American politics in people like Pat Buchanan and in events like "the Battle of Seattle". What, really, is the difference between Pat Buchanan and Ralph Nadir, aside from the fact that one doesn't mind gay people? And how trivial of a difference is that? The next century will be marked by an increasing coming together of the left and right, as they realize that their common authoritarian ends are really quite similar. Leftists will become rightists and vice-versa. Nothing new there. The common thread lies in man's frightening unwillingness to think critically and his fear of others who are different. It's a syndrome that exists, deep down, in nearly everyone — that the world would be a much better place if only everyone thought and acted like I do.

As for me, I just want to be around people that think. I haven't found too many of them in college, and so I see no need to be there right now. When I went to college I had bought into the whole lie about the accumulation of *Geist*. Now I know that nothing could be further from the truth, and that universities all too frequently function to instill a specific orthodoxy and not to encourage actual thought. +

Nick Fitt is the guitar player for the Dimestore Haloes

Oxymoron

PUNK
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INTERVIEW WITH VOCALIST SUCKER



Q: What's the line-up today?

A: The line-up is still the original one, except that our bassist has changed three times. So now we are Sucker on vocals, Martin on guitar, Morpheus on bass, and Bjoern on drums.

Q: How do you think OXYMORON managed to become so well-known?

A: We have no idea. We just play the "old-school" punk style we like and do it our own way. It would be nonsense to try des-

perately to sound exactly like bands back in '81, since it's 2000. We just play the music how we think it should be played today, given the roots that we have. It's always shit if you try to be too much like some other band, since you have to be unique and self-made. If a song comes into my mind that's just the way it is, and then we make the best out of it. That's all.

Q: Some bands even name you as one of their influences. What do you think about that?

A: We never expected to get so far, let alone inspire other bands some day. We just started and wanted to get our music across, since in the early nineties there wasn't much going on on the punk or Oi front anymore. Nowadays there are loads of great bands around again, and the scene grew to massive proportions worldwide. We've enjoyed all the years we've been going now, although there have been hard times when it seemed to us that we had no future as a band. But we've gone through many troubles and are still here, and at the moment there's no reason why we should call it a day. We're still

young and hopefully we have some more years ahead — not like these reformed bands from England in their mid-forties! (laughter)

Q: What's the differences between the various scenes, and what are they like in the different countries you've played in?

A: Generally, it's quite similar concerning the scene itself. The differences are in the customs of the various countries and the way people live there. Japan was like being on another planet when it came down to culture, but the punks and skins we met there basically did the same things as they do in Europe or the States. The places you play and how you're treated by the owners of the venues or promoters, that differs a lot, depending on which country or part of it, that you are in.

Q: And what did you think about the American scene?

A: There's a lot of differences from one area to the other, so it can't be reduced to just a few impressions. The scene itself isn't that different from ours over here; it always depends on exactly where you are but generally it's quite similar. The clubs and venues are run much more strictly and they have bouncers almost everywhere, like in England, and there's always a problem with alcohol. Plus, you're not even allowed to smoke in some places! But we had a good laugh and enjoyed it, although the American system is so fucked up and full of double standards.

Q: Some good and bad impressions from the latest tour in the States?

A: Well, it was amazing how many people know us over there, and we played some of

our best gigs there in terms of the atmosphere, e.g., in Philadelphia in front of 1200 people and in all the California shows. It was also well-organized, which made it easier for us than the last time we were there. It was definitely the best tour we've done so far, and we really enjoyed those few weeks. So many things happened on this trip that it's hard to tell any stories about it. The worst thing in the USA for us was the problem with no smoking in the bars in some states, and all these alcohol troubles you have. I can't really compare this situation in the U.S. with that over here. One memory, however, is that the SF Police were following us for almost a thousand miles because we were suspects in a violent crime that was committed the day we played there. Some wankers had assaulted a black guy and carved a swastika on his breast, and the

one else what to think. But that doesn't mean we don't have our points of view or that we wouldn't stand up for them. They just reflect our experiences in life so far, what we have gone through, and about life as we know it. If people can identify with our lyrics and have the same feelings, or at least understand what we want to express, it's great. We don't preach and we don't try to write about things we don't know anything about. Otherwise it wouldn't be honest.

Q: Do you think "Westworld" is breaking new ground or that you're beginning to change, music-wise?

A: I don't actually think that we moved to another kind of music, or that "Westworld" is that different from what we had previously done. The sound of the album may move a bit into another direc-



cops got an anonymous phone call that said it was OXYMORON. So we ended up being interrogated and having our photos taken.

Q: What are your lyrics about, and why do you as a German band sing in English?

A: We always mainly listened to British and American bands, and so it just happened naturally. I can't write German lyrics; to be honest; if something comes to mind it's automatically in English. A lot of German bands sing in English too, probably because the country was Americanized since WWII, which also had its effects on the music. So it's nothing unusual here. Our lyrics in general are about what we think of this world, our personal opinions — without telling any-

singles, but I personally believe it's quite similar to the "Fuck..." album. We wanted to make it sound that way and it was intentional that it didn't sound exactly like everything we've done before. A band whose third album sounds exactly like their first one is getting boring and pointless, in our opinion. We've made some progress and developed our style, that's true, but that's normal, isn't it? A band has to move on and make some headway. Nevertheless, it's still in the same vein as the stuff before, I think, and we won't turn into either a metal or a pop band, I can promise you that.

Q: You are planning to put out a new full-length album in the near future. What will it be like?

A: The new songs that have been written so far are typical OXYMORON songs. Some sound more like our early stuff, and some are a result of an eight year long band history. The forthcoming album will be recorded, hopefully sometime in the Fall or Winter, and it'll probably have about fifteen tracks on it. As far as I can say, it will be a mixture of everything we've done so far musically, and it also has a few new influences, too. But we didn't totally change our style, but simply improved it, so it'll definitely be in the same vein as the stuff before. Some songs could have been on the "Fuck the Nineties...", whereas others are more like those on "Westworld". Others even date back to the time when "The Pack is Back" was done. So it will be the album reflecting the longest period of OXYMORON so far, because the other ones all used to feature songs done in roughly one and a half years, but now so much material has been built up that we can pick out the songs we want to record.

Q: Which of your albums do you like best, and what is your favorite song?

A: It's usually the latest album we've done, because we've played the old songs much longer. My personal fave is probably "Life's a Bitch", mainly because I can identify with it almost everyday and it is full of emotion.

Q: Influences and inspirations?

A: There have been so many bands that inspired us when we started, mainly the early 80's UK punk wave but also some old school US hardcore. My personal faves always used to be Blitz, Major Accident, OWS, and the old Exploited stuff, Martin's were the Angry Samoans and Stiff Little Fingers, and Bjoern's were the likes of D.I. and Gang Green. Today there are also some other groups that definitely have had an influence on our music, e.g., Motörhead and Turbonegro.

Q: What are your favorite bands from the USA at the moment?

A: You've got a shitload of good bands over there. Some of our favorites are the Anti Heros, the U.S. Bombs, the Ducky Boys (RIP), D.K.M., the Reducers, the Choice, Defiance, the Service, the Lower Class Brats. Plus, we've got a lot of respect for some old bands that are still around, like Agnostic Front and the Misfits.

Q: Have you had any proper jobs and, if so, what are your professions? Or are you able to live off the music alone?

A: No, we can't live off the band. Everyone has to work at something for a living beside playing in OXYMORON, since you don't earn much money as a punk band even if you sell several thousand records and attract good crowds. It's quite hard sometimes to manage doing both, since we spend a lot of time with the band, touring etc., and we have to sort things out constantly to make it all possible. We have to do odd jobs or work, for example, as taxi drivers or in part-time jobs, so that this leaves us with enough time for



the band. I never learned the skills to get a proper job, but Bjoern used to be a beer brewer some years ago.

Q: Do you think punk is more like a fashion today, with bands like Green Day or Rancid on MTV?

A: Well, back in the early eighties punk was a new trend and many people just jumped on that train, too, so I guess it's not that much more of a fashion than it was ten or fifteen years ago. Actually the guys who became punks afterwards, when the big wave was over and new fashions became

popular, really meant what they were doing, because they chose it as their thing despite the fact that it wasn't "in" anymore. Green Day isn't a punk band anyway, fuck them, they're just a product of what the music industry wanted to sell as punk to the masses who don't know anything about its real meaning. Rancid, on the other hand, were a good band when they started, and they put out some great records. But I can't understand why they decided to go in this "professional" direction, since what's going on around them is not really punk rock anymore. If you want to call yourself a punk band there are some things you simply can't do. Let's just say that you should have an eye on some things that punk stands for and not cross that line. That's why they're now seen as "traitors" by many in the scene.

Q: Some people feel that punk has lost its original meaning, and has just become a new youth fashion.

A: I definitely don't think that in general it's lost its basic intention. You must admit that it was something different in the very beginning, when mohawks were totally new and the whole outfit shocked the public. But although it has established itself as some ongoing subculture, it still has broader cultural effects and the majority still refuses to accept it, even after all these years. Otherwise you wouldn't get the boot if you dyed your hair and you'd have the same chances of being hired when you tried to get a job. Everyone should just feel free to live in the way he or she chooses to, and if you are only part of a uniformed mass it sucks. Nevertheless, you can be part of something and adopt things that you agree with and still be an individual person. It's just important to use one's brain and not to repeat, in parrot-like fashion, what other people preach to you, and to

dress the way you want to, not how others expect you to. We do it our way and we don't really care what anyone else thinks about it, precisely because it is our own way. We don't tell other people what to do or think, so nobody has a right to tell us what to do or think.

Q: Is there anything that really pisses you off after these years or did anything change seriously since you've started as a band?

A: The slander pisses me off, the better known you get the more people tell shit or

spread lies about you just because they think you must have become arrogant or whatever. It seems like they begrudge you when you've achieved something, even though we've put a lot of work and energy into the band and we live for it everyday. Especially in Germany it's some kind of jealousy I guess, and they eye you suspiciously, but we're the same guys that we were five years ago. And pretty damn nice ones, by the way...

Q: What would make you call it a

by crook, you know? If there would be only me left or the band would break apart, I would form another band with another name, because OXYMORON stands for all of us.

Q: What's next? Isn't there a singles comp coming out soon?

A: Yes, this compilation album consists of all our singles tracks that were originally out on vinyl only, plus all the songs we released

ly the same. We also want to put a video together featuring loads of live and offstage footage. Hopefully we'll manage to do that this year.

Q: Any last words to your fans?

A: Thanks a lot to everyone who writes to us, comes to our shows, and believes in what we're doing. We would be nothing without all you guys out there, since it's mainly you who motivate us to keep press-

WE'RE THE SAME GUYS THAT WE WERE FIVE YEARS AGO. AND PRETTY DAMN NICE ONES, BY THE WAY...

day, and what would happen if the band split up some day?

A: OXYMORON would split up if the three original members weren't in the band together anymore, I guess. I don't like bands that are going on and on with only one guy left, changing the line-up completely all the time, and trying to keep it going by hook or

exclusively on compilations, and it will also include a video clip. This CD is dedicated to the people who no longer have the possibility of getting ahold of the 7"s, and we also thought of it as a kind of compensation for those out there who don't even have a record player anymore. Times change, you know. And you can't simply ignore those changes and pretend like everything is exact-

ing on when the times are hard. Prost! ✚

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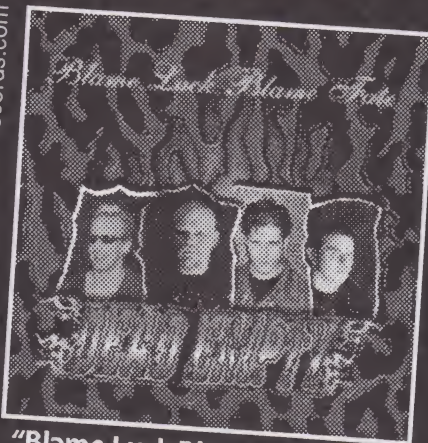


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After my unhip Deep Purple tribute in *HL* #9, editor Bale took particular relish in receiving my most recent column, which was sure to offend even the most open-minded, medicated of you punks. After all, I raved about a live gig by laid-back ol' NRBQ. In an email confirmation that he had received my latest, the editor incredulously (OK, humorously) commented, "NRBQ, eh? Can we expect the EAGLES next?"

What Bale must not've been able to fathom is that I think these guys (NRBQ, not the Eagles) ARE cool. In fact, my numbered advance ticket suggested that I was the third biggest 'Q fan in my metropolitan area. (Again, a disclaimer: NRBQ's stu-

JUKEBOX JURY

by jeff jarema

dio LPs are largely too lightweight and leave me cold, but "live" I still say they rule. "God Bless Us All" is their representative live recording.).

Not lost on me was the fact that advance ticket #4 was purchased by my older brother, Dave, an NRBQ fan since '69 and, of course, the guy that first got me into 'em. Dave has inspired my interest in so much great music, from the obvious gods to shared guilty pleasures like early Deep Purple and very early Grand Funk Railroad. Brother Dave was involved in most of the fun discussed in that "feel-good" last column, which chronicled ten days of kicks including that superb NRBQ show, as well as my guest three-hour radio appearance the following week and a record store fluke find of a super-rare mid-sixties local garage album (at the absurd cost of less than peanuts).

On a Monday night, I bashed out my recount of recent events as an overdue *Hit List* column for issue #10. The following day, I emailed it to Bale. One day after that, my brother was hospitalized in a diabetic coma. He died last week. Now, I can't imagine that anybody wants to read my sad, sentimental thoughts 'bout my much-loved brother. Why would any of y'all care? It wouldn't be fair to expect you to be interested. Yet I've gotta pay tribute, so hang on

'cause it's all rock 'n' roll-related. After all, I've never known - and doubt if I ever will know - anyone that was more rock 'n' roll-related than Dave Jarema.

When I was guesting on WXYC (Chapel Hill, NC) in early September, since the show was theme'd as a "garage-punk" special, the staff DJ asked on-air about my unhealthy appetite for obscure mid-sixties rock 'n' roll. As banter, blame was accurately placed on my older brother blaring the Yardbirds' "Over Under Sideways Down" and other exotic LPs throughout our house, way back when I was a brat. In a very karmic accident, at that moment we had "Lost Woman" off of "O.U.S.D." queued-up on the radio station's turntable! Even better, my bro was listening to the radio from work that night. He told me the next day that he was real appreciative of my acknowledging him. In some way I'm happy about that, but more importantly I mention it because it can't be understated how much of an influence he was on me (for better or worse).

It was widely accepted that Dave was no great student. As a pre-teen, I remember finding his untouched high school algebra book. Actually, though, it did feature incredible psychedelic-designed inscriptions inside its front cover; proclamations like, "Be a loyal plastic robot for a world that doesn't care" and "Be a jerk, go to work" (both from "Brown Shoes Don't Make It"; Mothers of Invention, '67). While in retrospect Frank Zappa was likely as much a jerk as his targets, Dave on the other hand really was one of the good guys. Pardon the cliched claim, but he was truly without pretention, and was very much at odds with the money/consumerism/status culture of today.

Dave had a million great stories. Me, I dug the fine details. He

would tell me about the square record store scene in Raleigh, NC, which he had to look into when our family moved down from NY in '66. However, due to WKIX' 15-minute per night psychedelic set, the local shops did stock the ultra-sought after "99th Floor" by the Moving Sidewalks (which probably still sits with all the rock 'n' roll shit he left behind). Also, I greatly appreciated his tale of placing his mitts for the first time on "Sgt. Pepper" in a retail record bin back in June '67, but within minutes of discovering an even greater temptation, "Paul Revere & the Raiders-Greatest Hits"! As he explained, while he loved the Beatles, "Sgt. Pepper" had all these weird song titles that he had never heard, whereas the PR&R disc

had all his favorites under one cover. He bought Paul Revere that day, in case it needs to be mentioned. In the past few years, while firmly in the grasp of middle age, he maintained an admirable desire to try out music he had missed the first time around, including Pink Floyd's "Piper At The Gates Of Dawn" LP, obscure Beach Boys albums, and Arthur Lee's Love.

Probably the one thing I "hated" about Dave was that he had seen all the greats in concert, whereas I had missed most of 'em, thanks to the decade-length divide in our age. My first concert was Kiss, in '76.

Dave was in most respects as "rock 'n' roll" as a more recognizable name like Lester Bangs. After all, Lester got his start by submitting a review of "Kick Out the Jams" to Rolling Stone.

JEFF JAREMA

No epiphany, let me tell you. As for Dave, he missed once-in-a-lifetime opportunities to see the Beatles at Shea Stadium and a Byrds/Raiders bill in White Plains, NY, both due to Cub Scout commitments, but eventually caught the Hendrix Experience as his first concert and was hooked for life, right to the very end. I could listen all night to his tales of seeing Led Zeppelin, Black Sabbath, and Alice Cooper on their earliest tours. On the last night we were together, a few minutes before grabbing that obscure garage LP mentioned earlier in this column, he raved about seeing Roxy Music back on their first US tour in '72; also Captain Beefheart, same period.

Dave was in most respects as "rock 'n' roll" as a more recognizable name like Lester Bangs. After all, Lester got his start by submitting a review of "Kick Out the Jams" to *Rolling Stone*. From the same period, I found a yellowed Virginia Episcopal School newspaper that featured Dave's review of the same record, which was notable for its enthusiasm for everything but the extended "Starship", which he rightly found a big bore. Of course, his editors were as bad as Lester's at RS...they listed the album as "Kick Out the Jams"!

Dave bugged my parents for drums and, between their Christmas gifts and his lawnmowing fund raising, he finally had his Ringo

Ludwig kit by his high school years in the late sixties. He played for nearly three decades, playing in many bands, and once even backed punk icon Peter Noone. But diabetes was a formidable enemy, contributing to complications that led to his having to sell his last drum set several years back. To me, this seemed damn cruel. After all, Dave lived to rock 'n' roll.

There's not much else to say. Over the past year, anytime a new record or two was added to my jukebox, I couldn't wait for my brother Dave to come over to dig the brilliance: "Omaha", "Paper Sun", "Beck's Bolero", "I Feel Free" (obviously, we didn't share a great passion for *Hit List*-type punk). To be honest, Dave and I never grew out of our adolescent love of rock 'n' roll. It's just too typical that he was with me last month, enjoying the shit out of NRBO, listening to my radio show (calling

the station to congratulate me on my good choice in program selection, too), helping me hunt for albums, telling me his fab stories 'n' jokes 'til the very end. I already miss him. ++

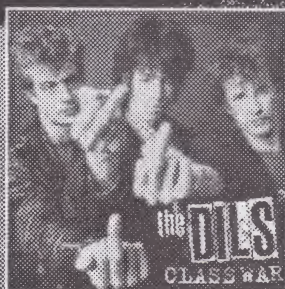


Dave on the drums, back in the 60's

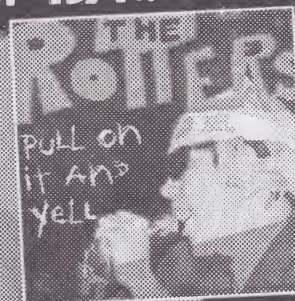
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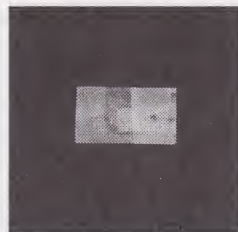
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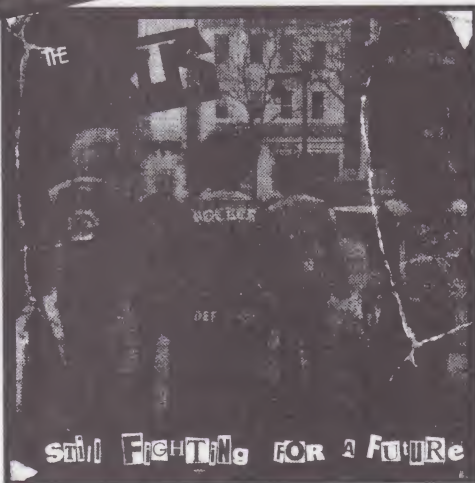
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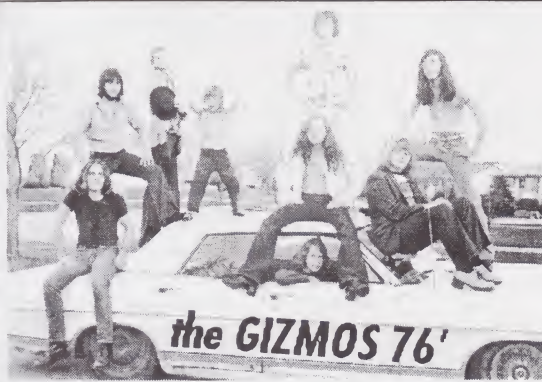
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You could call them geeks and you could call them freaks, but just don't call them losers. This rag-tag team of underground rock writers, outcast musicians, and pranksters has had '70s punk collectors scratching their heads but nonetheless admiring their quirky recorded output. Who were these weirdos, these guys who sang about muff divin', pumpin' to Playboy, being a human garbage disposal, and regular dudes? Were they punks? Were they a joke? Were they a bit of both? Did they even know what they were doing? How did they come to release four EPs and one side of a split LP, by which time they boasted no original members? Now their story can at last be told!

the GIZMOS

by Alan Wright





"The original idea of the Gizmos came about in late 1975 when Bob 'Mr. Bear' Richert, publisher and editor of *Gulcher* magazine, heard a cassette of roommate Ken Highland's songs that were made back when he was in high school, and who then had the bright idea of doing a seven-inch EP of the stuff," says former Gizmos vocalist Eddie Flowers. "The original bright idea was to do a single," says Bob Richert, but it soon turned into something more. "By the time Ken was done scheming, it had become a new recording project for a 7" EP that Richert would finance," explains Eddie. "Ken brought in a band of northern Indiana hard-rockers called Cerberus." Cerberus consisted of Rich Coffee (guitar), Dave Sulak (bass), Rick Czajka (guitar), and Jim DeVries (drums). The rest of the Gizmos consisted of "an Indiana University glitter-rocker/*Gulcher* fan, and a collaborator with both Ken and Bear, as well as yours truly. I remember meeting Davey Medlock at a Patti Smith/MX-80 Sound show, and I think it was Bear that proposed the EP as well," says Eddie. Bob says he "proposed that Davey sing background vocals on the EP as well." The average age of the Gizmos at this point was 18, with Rick being the youngest at 16 and Davey Medlock being the oldest at 21. This was happening quite awhile before the initial appearance of "punk rock," and suffice to say there was not a punk scene in Bloomington.

"At the times I was in Bloomington, actually four different trips from summer '74 to March '77, the local scene was still very much post-'60s hippie stuff," says Eddie. "Lots of bluegrass, a couple of jazz clubs. Indiana University has a huge music school. MX-80 Sound had no real following. When we did our first EP, there wasn't a 'punk scene' anywhere, except in New York and London! Our whole sense of what we were trying to do came from records: Stooges, Velvets, MC5, Sonics, Shadows Of Knight, Dictators, Black Sabbath, Blue Oyster Cult...you get the picture. The influence of '70s fanzines, *Creem* magazine, Richard Meltzer, and the 'under-the-counter-culture' was very big. We used the word 'punk' quite a

bit, but it hadn't been codified yet. I remember being horrified in '75 when mainstream rock critic idiots started calling people like the Tubes and Bruce Springsteen punk rock."

"Back then you could find stuff like the Stooges and Blue Cheer really cheap," says Rich. "Ken would find duplicates all over the place for around a dollar, and then mail me a bunch of records. That was cool, because he knew much more about records than I did." "I forced everyone to listen to the Velvet Underground's 'White Light/White Heat,'" recalls Ken. "You can hear it on 'Chicken Queen,' where I'm trying to do 'Sister Ray' mixed with 'Search and Destroy.' The riff from 'Muff Divin' was a crossbreed of 'It's Too Late' by the Dolls and 'Beginning to See The Light' by the Velvets," he admits. "I read interviews with Jello Biafra, and when he lived in Colorado, everyone was into a lot of hippy-dippy stuff, and the good classic '60s garage and noise things were very underground, so he could find them dirt cheap."

During the first Gizmos session on March 20, 1976 the band recorded a bunch of songs which ended up turning into the first Gizmos EP. It contains warped tunes like "Muff Divin' (In Wilkie South)," written by Ted and Ken. Ted, according to Eddie, later became a dentist. As Eddie says, "How very oral of him." According to Bob, however, "Ted became a gynecologist. That's what his plans were." The fact is hard to verify, since, as Bob says, "We don't know where he is." If he did indeed become a gynecologist, it makes the song even funnier! On the debut EP there is also a strange song called "Chicken Queen," which sounds like a cross between the Doors and the Stooges. The EP also included "That's Cool (I Respect You

More)" and "Mean Screen." Six songs were actually finished in slightly under 10 hours, including unreleased versions of "We're Gonna Rumble" and "Pumpin' To Playboy," as well as outtakes of the others except for "That's Cool," which was cut in just a single take.

The Gizmos were mainly a studio project that made use of a small Bloomington bedroom studio. Most of the songs were recorded with little or no practicing, until a take was considered successful. "They were done in a four-track home studio run by a local would-be engineer named Richard Fish," says Eddie. "Chinaboise, Rich Stim's project before he joined MX-80 Sound, had recorded there too. We didn't even utilize the four tracks available, because we decided it would be faster if everything was done live so we wouldn't have to mix it later. Levels were set, and everything, including vocals, was recorded live. The same was true with the second and third EPs. There's actually one edit: Rich's burst of guitar noise in the middle of 'Hey Beat Mon!' was from a different take. Kind of sounds like it, too." According to Bob, "the released version of 'Human Garbage Disposal' was actually a splice of takes 3 and 4." "The studio was really small," explains Rich. "He did have an inner room for the drums, but the rest of us, including him and the equipment, were all in the same room! There was no separation and we couldn't turn our instruments up very loud, so that was how we got our 'unique' sound. We'd ask him if we should sound like this, and he'd say, 'Well, I don't know.' Then he'd throw out a couple of weird fuzzboxes he had."

A year later, when the Gizmos regrouped at Fish's studio to record a second EP to follow-up their underground hit debut, they did so with a slightly



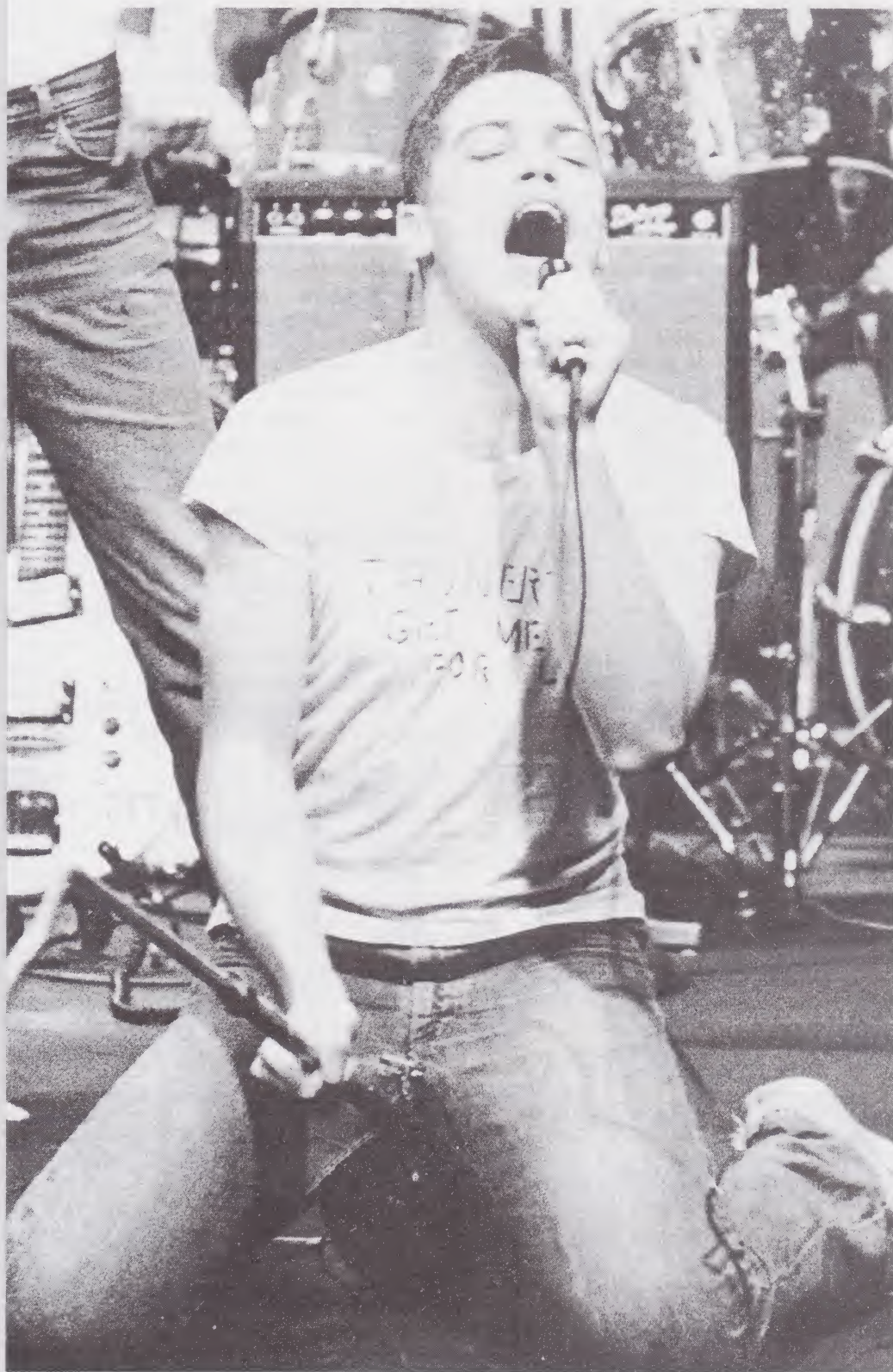
different line-up, as Rick had quit Cerberus (which had become a trio renamed Loner) and Ted's friend Don Jaskulske was recruited as an additional backing singer. They also recorded mostly without Ken because, as Eddie explains "He was late getting there on leave from the Marines, and was too busy trying to score some pussy to show up in Bloomington!" In fact, Ken only played on one song on the EP, although he wrote or co-wrote six of the seven songs. Jim DeVries also didn't make it to a lot of the sessions, so

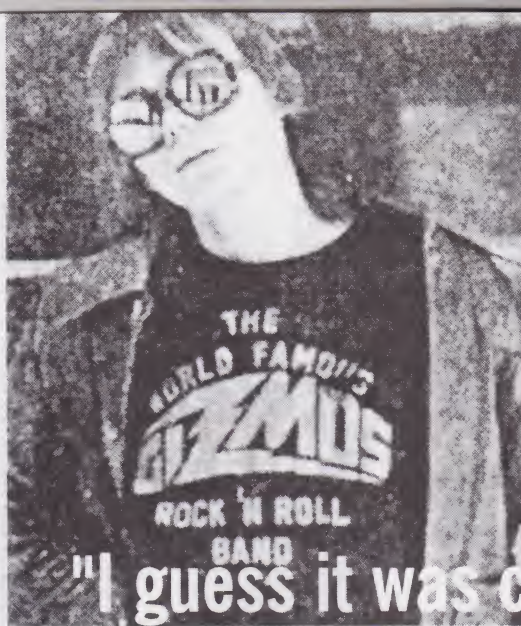
Davey, Eddie, and Ted each played drums on a song. Rich and Davey divided up what would have been Ken's lead vocals amongst themselves. The second Gizmos EP was entitled "Amerika First," and was released on Gulcher in mid-'77. Songs like "Human Garbage Disposal" were semi-true stories. "'Human Garbage Disposal' was a true song," says Bob "As were all the others. Well, 'Muff Divin' may have only been Ted engaging in some wishful thinking." The song "Human Garbage Disposal" was inspired by Dave Sulak, who

once challenged Ken to an eating contest. Ken lost when he threw up. "Ballad of the Gizmos" tells the story of how they got together, and had a Velvets style to it. Rich got to sing lead on the Sonics rip-off "Kiss of the Rat", as well as "Cave Woman." "The reason I had written 'Kiss of the Rat' was that I had gotten the 'Explosives' album by the Sonics that Mark Shipper from *Flash* magazine did," says Ken. Mark Shipper also managed the Droogs and helped release their first two singles in '73 and '74. "I opened for the Droogs once!" said an excited Ken. "The Droogs played in Boston at the Rat in 1984, and it was my band, who were called The Hopelessly Obscure, who opened for the Droogs and the Lyres." "Pumpin' To Playboy" is a hilarious ode to male masturbation, and includes a funny rap at the beginning by Ted, who claims to be too clean cut to participate in the song, and thus decides to go out for glass of milk. "(I'm Just A) Regular Dude" finds Ted professing his fondness for being a "regular," heterosexual guy. As with the first EP recording sessions, there were outtakes of most of the songs, as well as one never-released track. "This was a song brought to them by Bloomington musician Johnny 'Cougar' Mellencamp," says Bob. "The song, 'Boring, Part One' was recorded by most of the Gizmos, except for Eddie and Davey, who refused to sing on the song, not being fans of Mr. Cougar's music. Cougar himself played guitar and sang backing vocals, with major Mellencamp fan Ted taking the lead vocal spot."

Gulcher magazine started in 1975 as a fan-based newsprint tabloid style publication about then-underground rock. Gulcher Records was an outgrowth of the magazine. Ken moved to Bloomington to work with Bob Richert in '75, and that summer Eddie came up from Alabama to assemble the [#0] issue of *Gulcher*. "That was the one with the MC5 on the cover," Eddie explains. "I was originally supposed to move up and be editor, with Richert as publisher, but when I realized he wanted to make it into some sort of Midwestern *Rolling Stone* instead of *Creem* meets *Teenage Wasteland Gazette*, I said 'No,' although I did write for most of the issues after that."

The Gizmos' live appearances were few and far between, since they were more of a concept than an actual band. "The original Gizmos weren't really a live band at all," says Eddie. "Before the first recordings, the various members hadn't even been in the same room at the same time!" Cerberus, the music-playing core of the Gizmos, were from Highland, four hours north of Bloomington; Ken was





"I guess it was cool being 'punk rock' before just about anybody else during that period."

about to leave Bloomington for the Marine Corps; Ted was a student at IU in Bloomington, but was from around the same area as Cerberus although they didn't know each other; Davey Medlock was an occasional student and Bloomington hipster. Eddie lived in Alabama and corresponded with Ken and Bear. "A month or so after the first recordings, we did sort of play live," Eddie explains. "There was this party at Dave Sulak's house in Highland, where the Gizmos played the songs from the EP. I think everybody except Davey M. was there. Cerberus played endless cover songs all night for a basement full of drunk teenage partiers: Aerosmith, MC5, Kiss, Bowie, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Nugent, Santana, and a Flamin' Groovies song that Rich convinced them to do. Then at the same time as the 1977 recording sessions, the Gizmos played two live shows with MX-80 Sound opening! I was sick, though, and didn't participate. Maybe two or three months after that, a line-up without either Ken or I played the First Cincinnati Punk Rock Festival with the Bizarros."

The "Gizmos World Tour" EP was released by Gulcher in early 1978. All four songs had been recorded at the same time as "Amerika First," between April 6th and 8th, 1977. "The title track continues Ted's story of the group from 'Ballad of the Gizmos,'" says Bob "But here they rock. 'We're Gonna Rumble' was inspired by Earl Vince and the Valiants' (a.k.a. Fleetwood Mac) 'Somebody's Gonna Get Their Head Kicked In Tonight.' This tune was originally a never-released outtake from the 1976 recording session. 'Gimme

Back My Foreskin" was the only song featuring Ken, and "Hey Beat Mon!" is even stranger, featuring some guest horn work from Rich Stim of MX-80 Sound, who had reissued their "Big Hits: Hard Pop from the Hoosiers" EP on Gulcher.

By the time of their fourth EP, "Never Mind The Sex Pistols, Here's The Gizmos," punk was a musical phenomena and the Gizmos had only one original member left. Eddie explains: "After the sessions in early '77 that yielded the second and third EP's, there was one live show in Cincinnati, and then the Gizmos became Mr. Bear trying to put together a "real" band around Ted Niemiec. I remember being opposed to them using the name, but Ken didn't give a shit, and there were actually contracts

assigning the name and rights to Richert and Highland. So a handful of locals, now very much aware of 'punk rock,' were rounded up to back up Ted. That's the band that did the 'Never Mind The Sex Pistols' EP, and even managed to tour the East Coast in '78." In fact, Eddie was asked to be part of this "new" Gizmos idea as well, but he chose not to take part. "The idea was for me to be a sort of 'secret weapon' like Handsome Dick in the early Dictators, where I would only be brought in on occasion. Back in Alabama, I was writing songs via mail with Rich Coffee, and we were talking about moving to L.A. to form our own band, so I declined. Rich and I did move to L.A. in 1979, and we tried to get something together for awhile before parting ways." Besides Ted, the band members for this new Gizmos line-up included Dale Lawrence (guitar, vocals), Billy Nightshade (bass, vocals), Steve Feikes (guitar), Shadow Myers (drums), and Phil Hundley (tambourine). With perhaps a more cliched understanding of what punk rock was supposed to sound like (as evidenced by the song "Jumpin' On the Bandwagon"), these new Gizmos cranked fairly garageband-style numbers like "The American Dream," "Tie Me Up," and a cover of the Sex Pistols' "Did You No Wrong," which they re-titled "Just A Little Insane." "It was re-titled from a lyric in the song," claims Bob "And it was learned off the B-side of 'God Save The Queen'." Ted then left the band to concentrate on school, and they continued on without him as a quartet of Lawrence, Nightshade, Myers, and new guitarist Tim Carroll. "That's how the 'Hoosier Hysteria' LP came about with no original Gizmos, explains Eddie. "After that, the "fake Gizmos" and Richert moved to Hoboken. Why? I'll never know! They





"We recorded before the first Ramones record came out. We were punk because we couldn't play."

changed their name to Just Like A Train, and Richert supposedly started a label called Hoboken Records, but never released anything as far as I know." In fact, Hoboken Records reissued the Social Climbers self-titled Gulcher triple EP as an album. The 1980 "Hoosier Hysteria" LP was a split release that the Gizmos shared with Dow Jones & The Industrials, a group of Purdue University students from West Lafayette, Indiana, halfway between Bloomington and Chicago. The slightly inane sense of humor still prevailed, and the songs are actually pretty good, with "Progressive Rock" poking fun at the popular musical style and "Real Rock & Roll Don't Come From New York" being

the standouts. According to Bob, "The band moved to Hoboken, with new drummer 'Crash' replacing Shadow Myers. But 'Crash' disappeared back to Indiana in the middle of the night. The Gizmos found drummer Robbie Wise from Brooklyn, and in March 1981 they recorded seven songs at Zeami Studio in NYC. "The Midwest Can Be Allright" was the only song released (so far), and that came out on the "Red Snerts: The Sound of Gulcher" album containing 16 Indiana punk/new-wave bands. "The Gizmos did briefly change their name to Just Like A Train, but eventually petered out," says Bob "By 1983, Dale had moved back to Indiana and he eventually recorded three albums with the Vulgar Boatmen. Billy moved to Boston, where he remains Kenne Highland's neighbor to this day, and Tim

went country and moved to Nashville in the early-90s." Bob Richert moved to Orlando in 1994, and revived the Gulcher label for Y2K. The Gizmos, along with other Gulcher bands like the Panics and the Jetsons, continued to grow in popularity as underground cult items after they broke up, mainly because several tracks were bootlegged on various "Killed By Death" and "Bloodstains" compilations. I asked Eddie what he thought the Gizmos accomplished in their brief existence. "Huh? Fuck if I know!" was his reply. "I guess it was cool being 'punk rock' before just about anybody else in that period. What it really accomplished for me personally is it gave me a sense of myself as a singer and songwriter — an artist, as opposed to a critic — which was how I'd seen myself before, as a rock writer. Except for a couple of aborted attempts when I was very young, actually doing my own music was something I hadn't really considered until Ken asked me to be on that first EP." These days, Eddie does a lot of graphic design for the Sympathy label, and plays in the L.A. band Crawlspace, which he has fronted since 1985. About the "Gizmos legacy," Rich has this to say: "We recorded before the first Ramones record came out. We were punk because we couldn't play. We didn't really expect to accomplish anything. Anybody that remembers anything about us, it's always a big surprise to me. A Swedish band called Sator covered 'Kiss of the Rat,' and that kind of freaked me out." Rich has been a member of many seminal L.A. garage bands, including the Unclaimed, Yard Trauma, Thee Fourgiven, the Tommyknockers, the Alter Egos, the Black Widows, the Egomaniacs, and currently the Excessories. Ken (now Kenne), who has made Boston his home since his stint in



the Marines, has stayed involved in music, fronting combos such as the Afrika Korps, the Hopelessly Obscure, Cryptic Edge, Majestic Gizmos, Johnny and the Jumper Cables, the Exploding Pigeons, and his current outfit, the Kenne Highland Klan. "I'm really proud of my work with the Gizmos," says Ken. "I even still play 'Human Garbage Disposal' in my set." Recently, Bob Richert reactivated the Gulcher label and has rereleased the first three Gizmos EPs. "I remastered the first three Gizmos EPs, along with eleven unreleased outtakes," says Bob, "as the CD '1976/1977: The Studio Recordings.'" It's nicely packaged, and the CD includes liner notes by Eddie and tons of pictures. A second volume of more unreleased recordings is due next.

Gizmos Discography:

"Gizmos" 7-inch EP, 1976 (Gulcher Records, GULCH-001) tracks: Muff Divin' (In Wilkie South)/That's Cool (I Respect

You More)/Mean Screen/ChickenQueen
"America First" 7-inch EP, 1977 (GULCH-002) tracks: America First/Human Garbage Disposal/Ballad of the Gizmos/Kiss of the Rat/Pumpin' to Playboy/Cave Woman/(I'm Just a) Regular Dude
"Gizmos World Tour" 7-inch EP, 1978 (GULCH-004) tracks: Gizmos World Tour/We're Gonna Rumble/Gimme Back My Foreskin/Hey Beat Mon!
"Never Mind The Sex Pistols, Here's The Gizmos" 7-inch EP, 1978 (GULCH-006) tracks: Jumpin' on the Bandwagon/Cry Real Tears/The American Dream/Tie Me Up/1978/Just A Little Insane
"Hoosier Hysteria" LP, 1980 (GULCH-101) tracks: (side one only) Progressive Rock/Pay/Dead Astronauts/Real Rock 'n' Roll Don't Come From New York/Bible Belt Baby/Reggae Song/Take Me To The River (other side by Dow Jones & the Industrials)
"The Midwest Can Be Alright" on **"Red Snerts"** compilation LP, 1981 (GULCH-102)
"America First" on **"Killed By Death"** #9 compilation LP, 1995 (Redrum Records)

"Human Garbage Disposal" on **"Bloodstains Across the Midwest"** compilation LP, 1995 (Bloodstains Records)
"1978" on **"Brainkiller"** compilation LP, 1999 (Ripper Records)
"Tie Me Up" on **"Killed By Death"** #20 compilation LP 1999 (Redrum Records)
"1976/77: The Studio Recordings" CD, 2000 (Gulcher Records) includes first three EPs plus outtakes/alternate versions: Pumpin' To Playboy/Muff Divin'/We're Gonna Rumble/Chicken Queen/Mean Screen/Human Garbage Disposal/Hey Beat Mon!/Boring, Pt. 1/Regular Dude/Amerika First/Gimme Back My Foreskin

Special thanks to Bob Richert for helping me out a lot with this article.

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MURRAY BOOKCHIN, MENTAL GIANT

The following self-evident Truths are distilled from Murray Bookchin's long-awaited *Anarchism, Marxism, and the Future of the Left: Interviews and Essays, 1993-1998* (Edinburgh & San Francisco: AK Press, 1999) (page references in parentheses):

1) The United States was not capitalist in the 1930s:

"Looking back at the 1930s, what I would like to emphasize is that it was an era of social transition, one that was neither fully capitalist nor fully precapitalist." "Capitalism had yet to come into its own, to commodify vast areas of life, to coopt the trade union movement." (p. 43)

Here Bookchin corrects the misconceptions of his predecessors Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Trotsky that the United States was capitalist - indeed, more capitalist than any other country - by the later 19th century if not sooner.

2) Murray Bookchin inspired the anti-nuclear movement:

In 1954, "the peaceniks, as we called them, believed that nuclear weapons were dangerous, but they gave surprisingly little attention, if any at all, to radioactive fallout, even counterposing the 'peaceful atom' to the 'warlike atom.' At that time, to attack fallout was, by implication, to attack nucleonics generally, even nuclear power. Happily, my leaflet ['Stop the Bomb'] really produced a profound effect on many of the peace activists that I knew.

I remember that the late A.J. Muste, who was regarded as the father of the peace movement in America, told me personally that the 'Stop the Bomb' leaflet completely changed his thinking on nuclear energy. As he put it, the leaflet showed that 'it wasn't the bomb alone that we have to worry about. We have to worry about atomic power as well.'" (pp. 51-52)

Sadly, as in the case of Lewis Mumford, the kudos privately confided in Bookchin by A.J. Muste are uncorroborated in any of his writings. There is no mention of Bookchin in Muste's collected essays or in either of his biographies. (1) "Stop the Bomb" seems a poor title for "a fiery pamphlet" assailing nuclear power in general. Sadder still, Bookchin has not included this historic text in any of his books, although it is clear that AK Press will publish anything he signs his name to, if this book is any indication. Bookchin himself regressed to a pro-nuclear position in his 1965 book *Crisis in Our Cities*, wherein he counseled cutting back on nonrenewable energy sources, but conceded that an "advanced industrial economy" could not dispense with "nuclear and fossil fuels, but we will employ them judiciously, always taking care to limit their use as much as

possible." (2) Since it goes without saying that we must have an advanced industrial economy, we must have nuclear power.

3) Murray Bookchin was the first to denounce hierarchy and domination:

In 1962 "I was calling for social changes that were more comprehensive than the abolition of classes and exploitation. I was calling for the abolition of *hierarchies* as well, of states, not of economic power alone. Hierarchy was a kind of psycho-institutional power based on social status - in other words, *rule and domination*, not only exploitation for material gain." "A hierarchy is an *institutionalized* system of domination," "notably patriarchy, racial degradation, bureau-



cratism, nationalism, and so on." (p. 55)

This is an important historical correction. Hitherto there was a widespread misconception, especially among anarchists, that anarchists had called for the abolition "of states" since the late

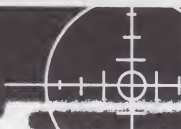
18th century, long before 1962. Many anarchists have naively supposed that this was what anarchism has always been about. There are others who have long but mistakenly believed that opposition to patriarchy antedated Bookchin (e.g., Mary Wollstonecraft in the late 18th century); that opposition to racial degradation antedated Bookchin (e.g., 19th century abolitionism, the civil rights movement of the 1950s, etc.); that opposition to bureaucracy antedated

This is an important historical correction. Hitherto there was a widespread misconception, especially among anarchists, that anarchists had called for the abolition "of states" since the late 18th century, long before 1962.

Bookchin (superficially misleading examples include the early Marx)(3); and that opposition to nationalism has been central to anarchism from the beginning. How wrong we all were.

4) As early as the later 1960's, Murray Bookchin exerted a "remarkable influence" over the New Left and the counterculture:

"In 1967 I was working with a collective called the *Anarchos* Group, which believed that the New Left and the counterculture could become a unified radical movement directed against all forms of hierarchy and domination and develop a libertarian program, a responsible organization, and a vision that was utopian yet com-



prehensible to ordinary Americans, free of ultraleftist jargon. The *Anarchos* Group turned out a magazine that tried to spread its ideas - with remarkable influence, in some respects. The two thousand copies of the magazine we published must have reached about 20,000 people in all, and we received a huge amount of mail from all parts of the country." (p. 85)

Usually, in their optimistic moods, radical periodicals estimate their readership as at most a multiple of three of their print run. Nobody really knows. Bookchin's formula implies that lifestyle anarchist periodicals like the *Fifth Estate* and *Green Anarchist* now reach a readership of 50,000, and *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed* has a readership of 66,000 or more.

In any case, no trace of Bookchin's "remarkable influence" is detectable in any histories of the New Left or the counterculture, not even one written by one of his acolytes back then, James Miller, who belonged to Bookchin's small anarchist faction at the final SDS convention.(4) Bookchin himself complains that Kirkpatrick Sale's voluminous *SDS* overlooks the Bookchinist role in SDS, possibly because it was insignificant even by Sales' generous receptiveness to detail trivia.

5) Wilderness does not exist:

"The truth is that wilderness has essentially disappeared." (p. 119)

Bookchin's proof is that the bison, elk and grizzly bears of Yellowstone National Park would not naturally remain there year-round under entirely natural conditions. The park, set up in 1872, has countless thousands of visitors annually, and it is generally understood that it is not presently pristine wilderness. Quibblers will say that this is like arguing that Central Park is not wilderness, therefore there is no wilderness anywhere, not even in Amazonia or Antarctica.

In mid-May, I will be visiting the tiny underpopulated Central American nation of Belize. I predict with confidence that I will confirm from direct inspection that wilderness does, after all, still exist.

6) Pre-urban humans were subhuman animals:

"Human beings emerged socially out of animality, out of societies organized according to biological realities like blood ties, gender differences, and age differences that formed the real structure of aboriginal societies . . . City culture made it possible for us to begin to communicate with each other as human beings, not as tribal members . . ." (p. 140)

Bookchin here corrects the misconception that family, gender and age play any part in urban societies. He likewise explodes the myth - inexplicably widespread among anthropologists - that inter-tribal communication has always been normal if not universal.

7) Workers are just another special-interest group:

"Confederal, antihierarchical, and collectivist, with the means of life municipally managed rather than controlled by any vested interest (such as workers, private industry, or more dangerously, the State), it ["communalist democracy"] may justly be regarded as the processual actualization of the libertarian ideal as a daily praxis." (p. 155)

Here Bookchin, avowedly the champion of the revolutionary left tradition, corrects the widespread misconception that, in this tradition, there's a fundamental difference between the bourgeoisie ("private industry") and the proletariat ("workers"). To him they're just the same: selfish "vested interests." The workers of the world

may have no country, but they have a city, and it is to it that they owe their highest loyalty, not to their class or, worse yet, to themselves.

8) Humanity's destiny is genetic engineering of other species:

His politics "considered human beings as the stewards, the ethical custodians of the natural world whose evolution human thought could potentially render self-conscious." (p. 265) Humanity has the ethical responsibility to be "a rational steward of the natural world, as potentially evolution rendered self-conscious and rationally purposive." (p. 266) "There is something that [human beings] can do: they can try to control the forces of first nature." (p. 284) "We could even use genetic engineering, for example, in such as way as to restore 'wild' areas." (p. 286)

Since "second nature" (man) is already self-conscious and rationally purposive (well, "potentially" anyway), the project of rendering "first nature" (other species) self-conscious and rationally purposive can only mean genetic engineering, as has been noticed,(5) as the only alternative - artificial selection (selective breeding) - would surely take intolerably long even as practiced on the most advanced animals, such as monkeys, dolphins and pigs. Undoubtedly it would take longer still to raise cockroaches and plankton to self-awareness. It is, nonetheless, our duty and our destiny to elevate the beasts out of animality and into libertarian municipalism. May Napoleon - I meant to say, Bookchin - live to see the consummation of his social ecological and communalist vision: Animal Farm.

9) England and France were the only "clearly defined" European nation-states until the later 19th century:

"The only clearly defined nation-states that existed in Europe during most of Marx's lifetime were in England and France." (p. 291)

Aside from Norway, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Switzerland, Russia, Prussia . . . Marx was also well aware of such clearly defined nation-states as the United States and the Latin American republics, not to mention such countries as China and Japan.

Incidentally, in the 19th century, England was not a nation-state. Since 1707 it had been a constituent part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, which encompassed England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

10) Corporations evolved to be destructive and vicious:

"Corporations never evolved to be nice, they evolved to be destructive and vicious." (p. 310)

Finally some clarity on the contentious question of corporations. Marxists and most anarchists have always supposed that corporations evolved, not to be destructive and vicious, but to make a profit. Bookchin here makes it clear that, given a choice between making a buck and hurting somebody, a corporation will invariably hurt somebody. The stockholders expect no less. They willingly sacrifice their financial self-interest for the common bad.

11) All revolutions have been in profoundly important respects urban revolutions:

"Indeed, as any close study of past revolutions reveals, every popular uprising has had not only an economic and social dimension but a profoundly important municipal dimension as well." (p. 327)

Thus there have never been any peasant revolutions, although Eric R. Wolf managed to write a book about just a few of the 20th century examples.(6) Wat Tyler, Stenka Razin, Pugachev, Nestor Makhno -

they were actually libertarian municipalists. Bookchin must be the only Marxist who is ignorant of the Peasant War in Germany (1525-1526), about which Friedrich Engels wrote an interesting book.(7) In 1917, Makhno related what the Ukrainian peasants thought of the city: "We cannot do without some 'fool' (and by this word *durak* they always meant the government). The towns have no other purpose than this. The idea of the towns and their system is bad. They favour the existence of the *durak*, the government.' So said the peasants." (8)

12) In the municipal utopia, you can be too young (but not too old) to participate:

"I am not suggesting that someone who wants to participate in an assembly should be excluded simply because he or she is infirm or elderly [like Bookchin]. But to welcome the pathologically insane or the visibly juvenile would be absurd." (p. 322)

It "would be absurd" to regard these strictures as the self-serving ploys they appear to be. Presumably somebody manning a table at the door(9) (Janet Biehl, perhaps) will diagnose the "pathologically insane" (as opposed to the pathologically sane, the social anarchists) and eyeball the "visibly juvenile" on the spot. This screening procedure is made both easier and more important by the fact that Murray Bookchin has already diagnosed his enemies, the Lifestyle Anarchists, as irrationalists and mystics. Thus it will suffice to disenfranchise most anarchists by ascertaining their incorrect ideology.

13) Anarchism entails running for office and voting:

"A communalist politics entails participation in municipal elections . . . Entry into existing village, town, and city councils, however, does not involve participation in State organs." (p. 155)

I am aware of no anarchist prior to Bookchin who drew any dis-

BOBBLACK

inction between local, state and national electioneering. Local government is also government, and (at least in the United States, Canada and Britain) local governments are the creations of state or national governments and the executors of their laws. Only Murray Bookchin seems to be unaware of this.

In this compilation of Bookchin's insights I have eaten around his book's 100-page centerpiece, "Whither Anarchism?", because I have thoroughly dealt with it before.(10) It too pulsates with portentous Thoughts - too many for me to take up here. I make no suggestion that certain reservations entered against these Thoughts add up to a coherent critique of Bookchin's mature Thought. Rather, they pay tribute to the sweeping range of his Thought. If Aristotle (a Bookchin hero) was "the master of those who know," Bookchin is surely the master of those who don't. There is scarcely a field of human knowledge where he doesn't step in it.

Notes:

(1) *The Essays of A.J. Muste*, ed. Nat Hentoff (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1963); Nat Hentoff, *Peace Agitator: The Story of A.J. Muste* (NY: The Macmillan Company, 1963); Jo Ann Ooi Robinson, *Abraham Went Out: A Biography of A.J. Muste* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981).

(2) Lewis Herber [Murray Bookchin], *Crisis in Our Cities* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965), 193, quoted in Bob Black, *Anarchy after Leftism* (Columbia, MO: C.A.L. Press, 1997), 77.

(3) Karl Marx, "Critique of Hegel's Doctrine of the State," in *Early Writings*, ed. Quintin Hoare, trans. Rodney Livingstone & Gregor Benton (NY: Vintage Books, 1975), 105-109 & *passim*.

(4) Kirkpatrick Sale, *SDS*

(5) Robyn Eckersley, "Divining Evolution: The Ecological Ethics of Murray Bookchin," *Environmental Ethics* 11(2) (Summer 1989), 99-116.

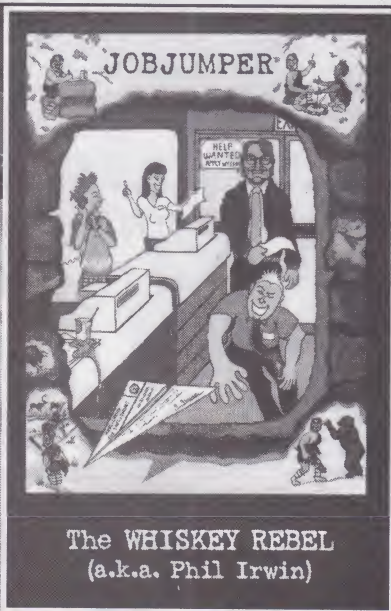
(6) Eric R. Wolf, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969).

(7) Friedrich Engels, "The Peasant War in Germany," in *The German Revolutions*, ed. Leonard Krier (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).

(8) (8) Quoted in E.J. Hobsbaum, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1965), 185-186. For some earlier examples of Russian peasant revolutions, see Paul Avrich, *Russian Rebels, 1600-1800* (New York: Norton, 1976).

(9) Not a figure of speech: "Those who decide to enter the assembly doors [from those previously determined to be "competent adult citizens"], sit down listen to discussions, and participate in them are, ethically as well as politically, qualified to participate in the decision-making process." (p. 342)

(10) Bob Black, *Withered Anarchism* (London: Green Anarchist & Eugene, OR: Anarchist Action Collective, n.d.). +



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 6) IRON MAIDEN - "Seventh Son of a Seventh Son"
 7) DIO - "Holy Diver"
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 9) The fact that BREATHE IN entitled their CD- R "The Rise Demo"
 10) Whiskey in general.

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S H I T L I S T

ABSENTEES

"Nieehbors Against Narks" LP

The kings of "Killed By Death" comps, the ABSENTEES, have reformed and unleashed a 17-song LP, bad spelling and all. Rocco Roll and the 2000 incarnation of the group make this new batch of tunes sound just as fucked-up and "authentic" as their famed 45, so obscure punk fanatics won't be disappointed. The tunes are basically rockin' rants on Long Beach asshole life, and the LP comes in a plain white sleeve and is limited to 100! (MC) (UG/2628 Magnolia/Long Beach, CA 90806)



ADOLPH & THE PISS ARTISTS

"Zero Hour" CD

I recently saw these guys kick some major ass as the main support band for the WRETCHED ONES in NY.

Sometimes bands that deliver live can't do it on record, but these Atlanta lads have put out one helluva a good CD with some really great, tough street rock tunes. Their name derives from the the great VALVES single, "For Adolph's Only", but even though they pay tribute to the ripping punk rock bands of the late 70s and even cover BOWIE's "Suffragette City", don't expect to find slavish late 70's hero-worshipping here. (JAW) (GMM/PO Box 15234/Atlanta, GA 30333)

ALARM CLOCKS

"Yeah!" CD

Known by many for their insane contribution to the "Back from The Grave" series, the "Yeah!/No Reason To Complain" single, Norton has outdone themselves by locating not just the masters to that, but a slew of unreleased mayhem as well. Okay, so all their other songs (except "Tree Stump Theme") are covers, but they demolish them in a style similar to the SWAMP RATS: savage, crude versions of "Louie Louie", "Money", "She's About A Mover", and more. Yeeearggghhh! (AW) (Norton/PO Box 646, Cooper Station/New York, NY 10276)

AMEBIX

"Arise" CD

Finally, this powerful band may get some of the credit they've always deserved. They were the kings and originators of crust/metal/punk, and this is a reissue of their long out-of-print "Arise" album ñ a

hugely inspirational record for a lot of today's bands ñ plus two never before released tracks and extensive liner notes by Pushead and band members. (JC) (Alternative Tentacles/PO Box 419092/San Francisco, CA 94141)



AMERICAN NIGHTMARE

"Protest Song #00" CD EP

This is officially the best HC record I've heard since KID DYNAMITE's debut, and possibly since "Start Today" by the GORRILA

BISCUITS. If you're into either one of those bands, go get this right now. The only bad thing about this CD is that it clocks in at just less than 12 minutes, but you'll have no problem listening to it over and over. (BAM) (Bridge Nine/PO Box 99052/Boston, MA 02199)



AMP 176

"Repo'd" CD

AMP 176's music is guitar-driven power pop-punk type of stuff that's pretty catchy. There are a lot of dual

vocals and strong song structures, though the CD starts to drag a bit after the first half. Guitarist/vocalist Erik also plays in the STEREO and a band called ATTENTION, and if you are into either of those bands you'd most likely enjoy this. (JDC) (Modern Radio/PO Box 8886/Minneapolis, MN 55408)



ANCHORMEN

"Punk Rock is Awesome" CD

"Awesome" this ain't, but it's charming enough. Humorous, poppy tunes similar to the DEAD

MILKMEN, only not THAT funny. The quirky songs are about the Civil War, girls, and Chinese food, and there's one REZILLOS reference. Not my thing, but it might be yours. (MC) (Unstoppable/PO Box 441915/Somerville, MA 02144)



ANTI PRODUCT

"Consume And Die...The Rest Is All Fun" CD

On first impression, they're

some hardline anti-corporate political band, right? Then you read in their extensive packaging about the big corporate musical instruments that they use and thank and are probably sponsored by. Suffering from the RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE complex, except that while RATM kind of rock and are musically interesting, this band is trite, weak, and annoying. (JC) (Cargo/17 Heathmans Road/Parson Green/London SW6 4TJ/ENGLAND)

AT THE DRIVE IN

"Relationship of Command" CD

The big label debut of this whirling Dervish of a band. The press is going crazy, the kids are going crazy, and rightfully so. ATDI are pure energy. The closest I can compare them to would be FUGAZI meets the MC5. Cedric's ass-over-tits beat poetics shine as the band provides a relentless swirling sonic attack. (JC) (Grand Royal)

BEAU BRUMMELS

"Live" CD

The BEAU BRUMMELS are one of my fave melodic "folk-rock" groups of the 1960s, but until now there hasn't been documented live evidence of the group's talent for catchy, ringing guitar and well-crafted vocal harmonies. This "Live" CD was recorded in 1974 at a series of reunion shows featuring all five original members. For the most part they sound as they did in '66, and some songs, many of which are unreleased in any form, have a more country-folk sound that is no less engaging. (AW) (Dig Music/1600 Sutterville Road/Sacramento, CA 95822)

BEBE BUELL

"Free To Rock" CD EP

BEBE BUELL was the main squeeze of many rockers, including Iggy and Stiv. She was also a Playmate in the 70s, and on top of all this she's Liv Tyler's mom. The 4 songs here are actually better than you'd think. "Normal Girl" is a cool, trashed-out 70's punk tune, whereas the remaining 3 have some bar-rock tendencies. (MC) (HYPERLINK <http://www.instantmayhem.com> www.instantmayhem.com)



BEEFCAKE IN CHAINS

"Feel It, Touch It, Taste It, Love It" 7"

Six catchy as hell rock'n'roll anthems that draw their lyrical content mainly from sex. Dirty sex,

no less! This might actually rival the MENTORS and DAYGLOW ABORTIONS in its perversity. I can't wait to hear more. (BAM) (Transparent/6759 Transparent Dr./Clarkston, MI 48346)



BELL RAYS

"Grand Fury" CD

The second full-length from these punk soul cats is even better than their first! It's better recorded, more fully realized, and

kicks ass like no tomorrow! They even do a new version of the GREY SPIKES' (Tony's old band) "Stupid Fucking People." Also way cool: "Screwdriver," "Have A Little faith In Me" and "They Glued Your head on Upside Down." Smart music with smart lyrics from smart people! (AW) (Upper Cut/4470 Sunset Blvd. #195/Los Angeles, CA 90027)

BEST/GENTS

split LP

The BEST and the GENTS were two New Jersey bands who put out a split LP circa 1966. Of the two, the BEST reign supreme with their trashy lo-fi garage sound, doing fab originals like "She's Gone", "You Mean Nothing To Me", and "Just Let Them Talk". Obviously, they were big STONES and KINKS worshippers. The GENTS side is rather lackluster, since their covers of the hits by bands like the ANIMALS, THEM, the STONES, and DYLAN sound like a lounge band with a really bad singer trying to be slightly dangerous. (AW) (RPC/no address)

BETTER THAN A THOUSAND

"Value Driven" CD

This is an Brazilian release on Pinhead Records, but it was already released here in the U.S. If you are into 88-style hardcore, then I guess you can't go wrong. If you liked groups like YOUTH OF TODAY and the GORILLA BISCUITS, you might want to pick this up. (JDC) (Pinhead/Caixa Postal 15112 CEP 01599-970/Sao Paulo/BRAZIL)

BIG BOY PETE

"The Psychedelic Adventures of Pete Miller, vols. 1-2" CDs

What is one to make of this fellow? During the 1960s, fueled by drugs of all kinds, BIG BOY PETE recorded a ton of material, most of which was unreleased at the time. Now we suddenly find ourselves deluged with his "lost" music. Some of it is positively amazing psych pop, and at times he even

verges on freakbeat, but this quality material is unfortunately interspersed with much less memorable fluff. Like BILLY CHILDISH, PETE would be better off releasing only his killer songs instead of everything. (JB) (Dionysus/PO Box 1975/Burbank, CA 91507)

BILLY SYNTH & THE TURNUPS

"Good Drugs and Bad Boys" CD

A great compilation of Billy "Starboy" Synth's late '70s/early '80s recordings with the TURNUPS. Select tracks from their two LPs, plus a bunch of rarer unreleased tunes, all remastered with in-ye-face punk sound! Billy's use of some old analog synth - well, maybe it wasn't so old back then - to make jarring and strange noises works well with the amped up sound of THE TURNUPS as they attack obscure '60s garage covers (likely culled from Billy's own "Psychedelic Unknowns" series) and demented originals like "Young Kids On Drugs" and "Off The Deep End." (AW) (Cracked c/o Bart Roberts/1551 Vesta Drive/Harrisburg, PA 17112)

BINGO

"Close Up" LP

A most excellent record that's worth seeking out. It features "Killed By Death"-sounding European punk which is totally snotty and memorable, and includes a frenzied reworking of VOM's "I'm In Love With Your Mom". (JC) (Bondage/ C.P. 156/09042 Monserrato (CA)/ITALY)

BLACKS

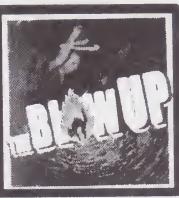
"Shattered" 7" EP

Great band, great 7". Trashy lo-fi garage on a limited tour edition 7" release. Dig the BLACKS as they dig you. (JC) (Big Neck/PO Box 8144/Reston, VA 20195)

BLACKS

"Send Curses" 7" EP

Another fine record from this intense garage punk band from Arizona. I've said lots of positive things about these guys in the past, and they still apply. You won't be dissatisfied with this. (JC) (Chemical Valley/3065 N. Dodge/Tucson, AZ 85716)



THE BLOW UP

"Dead Stars" 7" EP

This smokes. A 7" where all the tunes rock is a rare item. The two songs on the A-side are great, rocking in a BLACK FLAG meets

REVIEWS

VALENTINE KILLERS way. But the damaged punk tune on the flip takes the cake. A definite keeper. (MC) (HYPERLINK <http://www.emptyrecords.com> www.emptyrecords.com)

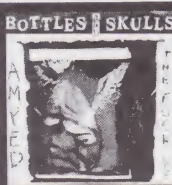


BLUETIP

"Polymer" CD

I could never get too into BLUETIP for some reason. They are super tight D.C. math rock, drawing from bands like JAWBOX and

QUICKSAND and molding it into a much more angular and somewhat confusing listen. BLUETIP are good at what they do and are a super hardworking band, so I'll keep listening and see if I can hone in on what they are getting at. (JDC) (Dischord/3819 Beecher Street NW/Washington, DC 20007)



BOTTLES AND SKULLS

"Amped The Fuck Up" 7" EP

Amped up is right. This band has a lot of dark punk rock swagger, with a hint or two of more aggressive

hardcore. They're really good, and since they're local I'm going to try and see them live soon. I'll let you know how they were. (JC)

(Sausage Baby/735 Grove Street #4/San Francisco, CA 94102)

BOVVER WONDERLAND

"Forgotten Heros" CD

Yet another great release from BOVVER, BOVVER, BOVVER WONDERLAND, with more songs about drinking, drinking, and more drinking. BOVVER play really good, catchy, punk rock that will have you singing along in no time! There are eight new originals, plus six older tracks taken from various releases. (JAW)

(Radio/PO Box 1452/Sonoma, CA 95476)

BREAD AND WATER

"Future Memories" 7" EP

Hardcore thrash, with elements of metal in the guitar licks and occasional Cookie Monster growls. For some reason, it seems impossible for Florida bands to completely escape the metal damage. Overall it's quality material, and has a really sharp-looking sleeve design. Recommended. (JC) (Burrito/PO Box 3204/Brandon, FL 33509-

SHITLIST



BREAK DOWN

"Battle Hymns For An Angry Planet" CD

Their name is BREAK DOWN and they are coming to a town near you to unleash some crazy shit

. Meathead hardcore complete with everything that's available in every other meathead hardcore band. The guitars are thick and well-played, but the vocals are really hurting and the lyrics are pretty dopey. (JDC)

(Thorp/PO Box 2007/Upper Darby, PA19082)



BRIDGEBURNER (yes, the space is supposed to be there)

"What Do You Know About?" CD

A collection of this band's singles from 1986-92, including their tracks from

the BORN AGAINST and NAUSEA splits. Well recorded and executed HC/punk a la DAG NASTY, 411 (Dan O'Mahoney's later band), or even the almighty PIST. Although it's only 8 tracks, it's still well worth tracking down. (BAM)

(Genet/PO Box 447/9000 Gent 1/BELGIUM)

BRISTLES

"Tattooed & Rotten" CD

Overall, this is pretty average punk rock with a vaguely U.S. BOMBS feel. It's a bit more "people-friendly" than the standard Beer City fare. Nothing outstanding, yet nothing horrible either. (JAW)

(Beer City/PO Box 26035/Milwaukee, WI 53226)

"Broke"

video and soundtrack CD

The movie is a frantic black and white study of the dynamics of being young and broke in the big city. Charming and entertaining, stylistically falling somewhere between "Clerks" and a film school final project. Worth renting if you can find it. I'm curious to see what will come next from this director. The soundtrack is jazzy and experimental, and works really well with the movie, as well as holds up on its own. (JC)

(Smog Veil/774 Mays #10, PMB 454/Las Vegas, NV 89451)



BULLDOG

"Circo Calesita" CD

No, it's not Oi, but rather melodic mid-tempo punk with a finely-honed pop sensibility. The production is more than heavy enough

to keep things from degenerating into the sappy sound that regularly afflicts today's pop punk releases. Most of BULLDOG's songs stick in your head after only a couple of listens, which means they're pretty memorable. (JB)

(Pinhead/CC 1297/CP 1000WAM/Buenos Aires/ARGENTINA)



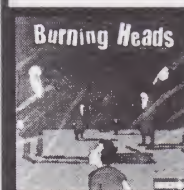
BURN IT DOWN

"Let The Dead Bury The Dead" CD

BURN IT DOWN play a somewhat brutal brand of hardcore. The vocals range between bellowing screams and low-pitched singing,

kind of like the CULT or DANZIG. Musically, the guitars rely on a lot of heavy muting and power chords with some picked-out stuff, and they do an unnecessary cover of the STONES' "Paint It Black". (JDC)

(Escape Artist/PO Box 472/Downingtown, PA19335)



BURNING HEADS

"Escape" CD

PENNYWISE meets NOFX, with a little H2O thrown in for breakdown effects. It's all right though, since it's from France. This band is better than your average

genero-punk bands, and might just do it for you. (BAM)

(Epitaph/Europe and Victory/USA)



THE BUSTED LIVES

"The Winner's Circle" CD

Snotty and obnoxious straight-up punk on the meaner side of things, as they are obviously influenced by the early

DWARVES and the ANGRY SAMOANS. Fucked-up, attitude-heavy vocals. My one complaint is that the production's got the dirt but not the power. (MC)

(Blueball/6517 Farallon Way/Oakland, CA 94611)

CANDYASS

"Orgy" CD EP

If the TOILET BOYS had a (mainly) female

musical equivalent, it might well be NYC's CANDYASS. "Bullets Bounce Off" is a superior example of mid-tempo hard rock with girly vocals and pop hooks, and is so radio-friendly that it could only be ignored in the current abysmal era of mainstream music. "Brenda's Boyfriend" and "Better Than You" are also fabulous tracks, and the other three ain't bad either. (JB)

(RAFR/11054 Ventura Blvd, Suite 205/Studio City, CA 91604)



CATCH 22

"Alone In A Crowd" CD

A speedy, light (lite?), upbeat ska-punk offering. Pretty damn fast and catchy, somewhat akin to a not so heavy LESS THAN

JAKE. Quality stuff, if you dig the skacore thang. Victory sure are branching out stylistically these days. (RK)

(Victory/PO Box 146546/Chicago, IL 60614)

CASUALTIES

"Stay Out of Order" CD

Another hard-hitting batch of tunes from this gutsy streetpunk band. Leaders in their field, this CD provides more of what their fans want and also comes with a CD-ROM feature. I can't play 'em, but it's a cool idea for the technologically-advanced mohican to enjoy. (JC)

(Punk Core/PO Box 916/Middle Island, NY 11953)

CAUSE FOR ALARM/MIOZ'A'N split 7"

CAUSE FOR ALARM play their asses off as usual, and provide two tracks of high-tempo New York hardcore. "Lost In The U.S.A." is instantly singalong-able. MIOZ'A'N are a hard working German band who are even more aggressive and powerful. (JC)

(Grapes Of Wrath/Oranienstrasse 37/10999 Berlin/GERMANY)



CECILIA ET SES ENNUIS

"On M'appelle Pussycat" 7" EP

What we have here is Cecilia from the NO-TALENTS singing 60s beat music in French, a

departure to say the least. The "pouncy" title track is filled with sexual innuendo, while the 2 songs on the flip are more upbeat and will get your head boppin'.

Music to dance and twirl your mustache to. (MC)

(Dionysus/PO Box 1975/Burbank, CA 91507)

REVIEWS



CHANTS R&B

"Stage Door Witchdoctors" CD

Man, this is the third great release from Bacchus Archives that I've reviewed this issue, and

it's the best of the lot. CHANTS R&B were a mid-60s R&B (duh) group from New Zealand who only released two official singles (included here). But now the vaults have been plundered and you get 13 fantastic jams and a radio interview. The description of "godlike R+B power" is a fitting one. Great, soulful originals and nice cover selections, (MC)
(Bacchus Archives/PO Box 1975/Burbank, CA 91507)

CHARGERS

"Street Gang Funhousing" 7" EP

This Ohio outfit cranks out dirty, slightly glammish Detroit-style r'n'r on this 3-track EP. You'll be familiar with the drill n' snotty vocals, distorted twin guitars, a driving beat, and a raunchy sound n' if you listen to the MC5, the STOOGES, or more modern punk'n'roll bands. All three songs are good, but the HUMBERS-ish "Twisted and Old" is the best of the bunch. (JB)
(Donut Friends/PO Box 3192/Kent, OH 44240)

CHESTERFIELD KINGS with MARK LINDSAY

"Where Do We Go From Here/Louie Go Home" 7"

The C-KINGS join up with former PAUL REVERE & THE RAIDERS frontman MARK LINDSAY on their new 45. The A-side is a really fine folk punk original with twin lead vocals and an irresistibly appealing chorus and guitar break. The flip is a live version of the RAIDERS' classic, recorded at Cavestomp 98. (JB)
(Living Eye/c/o Sundazed/PO Box 85/Coxsackie, NY 12051)



CHESTERFIELD KINGS

"Yes I Understand/Sometime at Night" 7"

"Yes I Understand" is one of the finest of the recent C-KINGS originals, with its

memorable melody line, cool guitar work, and Greg's snotty singing. And it even ends with a "For Your Love"-style bongo fadeout! The B-side is an impressive BEAU BRUMMELS cover that features Sal Valentine on lead vocals. (JB)
(Living Eye/c/o Sundazed/PO Box 85/Coxsackie, NY 12051)



CLONE DEFECTS

"Lizard Boy" 7" EP

I love this record. The CLONE DEFECTS are a relatively new Michigan band that truly carries on that state's unparalleled

smashmouth r'n'r tradition. The guitar leads are fantastic n' check out "Rouge River Rebel" n' the lead vocals are tough but sensitive, and the overall attack is nice and nasty. Way too badass for your lame self. (JB)
(Italy/4630 Avery/Detroit, MI 48208)

CLONE DEFECTS

"Blood On Jupiter" CD

Detroit's CLONE DEFECTS have put out another awesome CD. This is not as stripped down as their previous efforts n' one might say it's even a bit "polished", but if you've heard their other records that's not saying much. Raw as hell rock'n'roll in the tradition of the STOOGES, the PAGANS, and the ELECTRIC EELS that's a bit arty and quirky, but 100% stripped down and soul-shaking. (JAW)
(Tom Perkins/ POB 970936/Ypsilanti, MI 48197)



CLOSE CALL

"Too Close" CD

I thought Espo generally released different stuff than this. CLOSE CALL is like old-school hardcore, with a twist of some newer sound.

All in all, there's nothing too great about this. (JDC)

(Espo/PO Box 63/Allston, MA 02134)

CLUMSY

"Center of Attention Deficit Disorder" CD

Right away when you hear this CD you want to say "SOUL ASYLUM." Then you wait and say "no, REPLACEMENTS." But those bands ain't doing it no more and CLUMSY is, so I really liked it. It's a real nice change, and I'll be there when the band hits SF clubs in early 2001. (X)

(Idol /PO Box 720043/Dallas, TX 75372)

COCKSPARRER

"Live: Runnin' Riot Across the USA" CD

Easily the best show I have EVER seen, so just listening to this CD puts chills up my spine! This is the TKO release of the tour First Round Promotions brought to the states, the tour that no one ever thought would ever really happen n' COCK SPARRER's first ever US tour! The sound quality is great, the songs are stellar, and the CD even comes

ridiculously close to capturing the spirit of SPARRER, as well as how fucking over-the-top these shows really were. (JAW)
(TKO/4104 24th Street #103/San Francisco, CA 94114)

COMBAT READY

"Hates You" CD

Vulture Rock puts out another rocker, at times musically reminiscent of the ANTI HEROES. But some of the shit on this CD is so over-the-top that I'm not really sure if it's a joke or not. They have some of the most retarded, misogynistic lyrics I've heard in a while, but the music is quite hard-hitting and very catchy. (JAW)
(Vulture Rock/PO Box 1796/Stanwood, WA 98292)



CONFESSIONS

"Beautiful Sin/Like You Better" 7"

Slow and dirty rock'n'roll that would have made JOHNNY and KEITH proud. Two excellent sleazy tunes

with catchy hooks and great vocals, especially the two-part mixing at the end of "Like You Better". (JC)

(Craptacular/1105 Cache La Poudre Street/Colorado Springs, CO 80903)

COLUMBIAN NECKTIES

"Scene Of The Crime" 10" EP

This is slapping blast of punk rock fury that has that unmistakable Scandinavian intensity. This is a Dutch band rising from the ashes of SHAKE APPEAL, and I think they're better, too. There aren't really any politics going on here, just beer, boobs, and balls, but the music sounds more serious. Nice one. (SB)

(High School Refuse/Berlageweg 12/9731 LN Groningen/HOLLAND)

COMMIES

"Rock-N-Roll Alone" CD EP

So far, I have honestly not heard a Pelado record that I didn't think totally rocked. This one is no exception. The COMMIES play a snotty, old-school style that can't be beat. Cool name, too n' I'm surprised it hasn't been done before. (JC)

(Pelado/521 W. Wilson #C103/Costa Mesa, CA 92627)

SHITLIST

CREEPS

"Lights Over Baghdad/Each Day Is A Gift" 7"
Campbell's extra-chunky heavy metal/punk soup. I think SUICIDAL TENDANCIES plays music sort of like this now. Uninspired music with insipid lyrical content. (JC)
(Smog Veil/774 Mays Blvd. #10-454/Las Vegas, NV 86451)

CRYPT 33

"Dropkick" 7"

CRYPT 33 are halfway between DANZIG and I can't even name who the fuck else, but they play equally horrible metal/sludge with

thuggish/evil/hell lyrics. There's a total MISFITS/SAMHAIN influence going on here. The only good thing about this record is the production, which is ultra shitty. Evil, duuuuude! (JAW)

(Transparent/6759 Transparent DR/Clarkston, MI 48346)

THE CUTTHROATS 9

"s/t" CD

Ripping and relentless, as every song shreds from the get-go. The vocals seem to be a bit drowned out in the mix, which levels the playing field and gives each band member a very equal share. Hard-hitting and continuous rock/punk, with each song having its own character. (MD)
(MAN'S RUIN)

DAMNATION OF ADAM BLESSING

"Damnation" CD box set

The logical extension of what the ALARM CLOCKS mutated into, a psychedelic nightmare replete with over-the-top vocals, searing lead guitars, and haunting organ work. The first album is a classic, drawing some comparison in spots to the DOORS meet the VELVET UNDERGROUND. The second and third albums are patchier, due mostly to record company interference, including the addition of strings on the third album, but these too have their moments. (AW)

(AKRMA/PO Box 27/19100 La Spezia/ITALY)

DARLINGTON

DARLINGTON

"Texas Punk Rock Sweethearts" 7" EP

DARLINGTON are one of the best pop-punk bands going, and this is a good

smattering of their work. It's tight, melodic, and ultra-rockin', and I recommend it even if the song "Dreamsicle" is a dead-on WEEZER rip-off. (JC)

(She's Gone/http://geocities.com/shes_gone_records)



DARYLLS

"Punks" CD

A band that plays in the QUEERS/RAMONES style. Despite this, the DARYLLS somehow manage to

break free from that mold and craft some fine, entertaining tunes of their own. (JC)
(Bruce Monkey/no address)



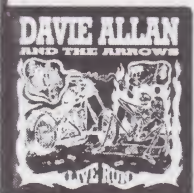
DAVID PEEL & DEATH

"The Pope Smokes Dope" 7"

I've always wondered what DAVID PEEL sounded like in his own bands, and now that I know I'm pretty much

blown away. Fantastic, bombastic, dirty rock'n'roll. Recorded in 1979, both tunes are excellent and feature WAYNE KRAMER on lead guitar. (JC)

(Hate/Circ.ne Gianicolense 112/00152 Rome/ITALY)



DAVIE ALLAN & THE ARROWS

"Live Run" CD

The first live album for DAVIE ALLAN & Co.? You'd think this would've happened sooner, but the

wait was worth it because this is great. 15 tunes, all of 'em fuzz-drenched instrumental winners. A must for fans and a nice introduction to a legend. (MC)
(Total Energy/PO Box 7112/Burbank, CA 91510)



DEAD BOYZ CAN'T FLY

"Everything You Missed" CD

Super DIY barely-out-of-the-garage punk. These folks are Italian, but this is much tamer than most

garagier/punk stuff from over there. It's simple, cute and refreshing in its innocence. I mean, it seems like these guys and gals really do just want to play for a good old drunken time. (SB)

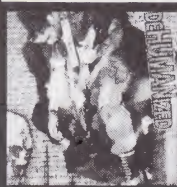
(Brilliantina Dischi/c/o Claudio Salvan/Via Carlo Marx 606B/20099 Sesto S. Giovanni/ITALY)

DEAD EMPTY

"Tattooed Women/Dead And Gone" 7"

Punchy galloping punk rock. The songs are catchy, the guitars are chunky, and the vocals are gruff. The B-side sounds like an Americanized STIFF LITTLE FINGERS. Pelado still rules. (JC)

(Pelado/521 W. Wilson #b202/Costa Mesa, CA 92627)



DEHUMANIZED

"Classified" 7" EP

DEHUMANIZED carry on in the tradition of great old New Red Archives

hardcore bands like KRAUT and SOCIAL UNREST. Tight musicianship and strong songs. Since this particular 7" is from 1997, I don't know if they are even still around. (JC)
(New Red Archives/PO Box 210501/San Francisco, CA 94121)

DISENGAGE

"Obsessions Become Phobias" CD

Guitar riffs abound on this one. Grinding high-end chords rain down over you in a continuous flow. Dark and heavy riff rock with haunting vocals akin to TOOL & STABBING WESTWARD. A good effort, but not anything that makes me think of this disc as unique. (MD)

(Man's Ruin)

DISRUPT YOUTH

"Lookin' For Answers" CD

This band hails from Orstralia, land of great rock'n'roll and also, apparantly, um, hardcore. This is ferociously fast hardcore with a few solos thrown in here and there and a metal edge. If that sounds interesting to you, then this just might be for you. (JAW)
(Beer City/PO Box 26035/Milwaukee, WI 53226)

DISSARAY

"A Lesson In Respect" CD

Death rock stuff with a song called "Piss". Yelled/shouted/screamed vocals, lots of alternate muting, and bad drumbeats. Avoid this at all costs.

(JDC)

(http://www.eclipserecords.com
www.eclipserecords.com)

DISSIDENTS

"Conformity Is Deformity" LP

Low and muddy recordings of mostly greasy kid stuff punk rock from the 1979. Songs are decently entertaining when decypherable (sp?). Obvious standout track would have to be "Let's get rid of grandma 'cause she

doesn't match the drapes". (JC)
(Smog Veil/ PMB 454/ 774 Mays #10/ I.V., NV
89451)

DIXIE BUZZARDS/SCAT RAG BOOSTERS
split 7"

Two newish bands that rock like hell. Sweden's DIXIE BUZZARDS feature members of the BLACKS, whose singles always impressed me, and they keep the quality mark high and unleash 2 scorchers similar to the OBLIVIANS. Canada's Scat Rag Boosters are another great new Canadian band in the LES SEXAREENOS and DEADLY SNAKES school, and their two blues-punk numbers are fantastic and worthy of any GORIES fan's attention. (MC)
(Goodbye Boozy/Nia Villa Pompetti
147/64020 S.Nicolo (TE)/ITALY)



DOGWOOD
"Building A Better Me" CD

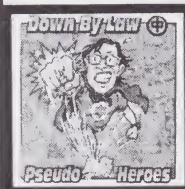
Hmm, the cover must be a misprint. This band ought to be called Dogshit. Take the most overused BAD RELIGION and ALL parts, mix them in with some crisp, excellent production (courtesy of the Blasting Room) and some insipid, blah lyrics (courtesy of God), and you have the latest Christian boy-wonders. Apparently, it's going to take a miracle to find a good Christian punk band. (RK)
(Tooth & Nail)



DOLLICIOUS
"Cold Cinder/Sevens" 7"

This English outfit belts out two rocking and riffy punk tunes. Strong female vocals and a surprisingly BIG guitar sound

(recorded at Toe Rag) make both songs winners. A fine addition to Get Hip's already fantastic roster. (MC)
(Get Hip/PO Box 666/Canonsburg, PA 15317)



DOWN BY LAW/PSEUDO HEROES
"Pseudo Heroes" CD

Five tracks from each band. The PSEUDO HEROES are a tight, melodic 3-piece that kick

out some excellent DOUGHBOYS stylings that are big on the guitars, harmonies, and rock. DOWN BY LAW turn in five covers recorded live in Europe last year ñ you get the WHO, AC/DC, CLASH, CHEAP TRICK and, er, LYNRD SKYNRD. All in all, a fine disc. (RK)

(Theologian/PO Box 1070/Hermosa Beach,
CA 90254)

DROP OUTS

"Nobody Likes You" CD

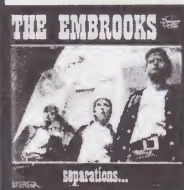
One part NOFX, one part GREEN DAY. In other words, it's absolutely nothing that you haven't already heard a million times before. When will it ever end? (JC)
(Bruce Monkey/no address)



E-CLASS

"Chances Ditched" 7" EP

Wow, this is from Texas, huh? It seems to me like it must be from Berkeley, circa 1989, since it's very CRIMPSHINE/SAMIAM-sounding, with a little FUGAZI thrown in for good measure. Even so, it's pretty darn good. (JC)
(Grade 9/PO Box 267/Denton, TX 76202)



EMBROOKS

"Separations" CD

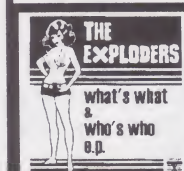
On their second (US) full-length the UK-based EMBROOKS have moved away from uptempo feedback-drenched Freakbeat and moved along the path toward moody mid-60's garage laments, murky production and all. Luckily, the quality of their own compositions and that of the covers they've selected haven't diminished, even if their focus has shifted. Much as I love their earlier hard-rockin' stuff, I'm almost as partial to this terrific follow-up. (JB)
(Dionysus/PO Box 1975/Burbank, CA 91507)



ENSIGN

"For What It's Worth" CDEP

This thing isn't worth much, but I have to hand it to them for actually progressing since their previous releases. For one, the singer is now developing vocal lines that don't fall directly with each snare hit. They have strayed from their original GORILLA BISCUITS approach on some songs for a heavier, crunchier sound. They even attempt to produce some sort of melody on "Left Hand Syndrome", which reminds me a lot of Shawn Brown-era DAG NASTY. (JDC)
(Nitro)



EXPLODERS

"What's What & Who's Who" 7" EP

REVIEWS

Four weird-looking Canadians, fuzzy loud guitars, and a definite punk attitude. The quality of the tunes is higher on their earlier Rip Off release, but this will please all the same. They have a different sound from most Rip Off bands, and an excellent CRIME cover helps this EP out quite a bit too. (MC)
(Teenage USA/PO Box 91/689 Queen St. W./Toronto, Ontario M5V 1X6/CANADA)



EXPLOSION

"Steal This" CD EP

The EXPLOSION slit the belly of the punk rock beast, and the good guts come gushing out. All fire and brimstone, chunky guitars, and bashing drums. A highly recommended EP from a potent punk combo. (JC)
(Revelation/PO Box 5232/Huntington Beach, CA 92615)

FILTHY THIEVING BASTARDS

"Our Fathers Sent Us" CD

This is a side project from Johnny Peebucks and Darius Koski of the SWINGIN' UTTERS. This CD ranges from POGUES-inspired songs like "Bastard's Wrath" to the great but ridiculously SAINTS-esque "Thick", and contains everything from. There are a lot of different things happening here, so don't let scare you. Everything from punk rock to more garagey numbers, to more folksy tunesff. it's all there. Great soulful lyrics on this one as well. CHECK THIS OUT. (JAW)
(TKO/4104 24th Street #103/San Francisco, CA 94114)

FIFI & THE MACH 3

"Tomahawk Whizz" double 10"

An excellent Japanese band with a strong female lead singer; they play classic RAMONES/DICKIES-style punk. Like both of the aforementioned bands they can especially shine on cover tunes, but don't rule out the originals because they are for the most part wonderfully executed, instantly catchy gems. A highly-recomended collection of tracks from all of their releases, plus out-takes and demos. (JC)
(Rockin' Bones/Via Cuneo 2/43100 Parma/ITALY)

FINKERS

"Fresh Set O'Prints" CD

The FINKERS are another relatively new power pop band from Oz-land. They're not

SHITLIST

they know how to write well-crafted mid-tempo pop songs with terrific melodies and choruses (such as "Adeline Now" and "I Can't Wait"). Some of these are destined to appear on future "Powerpearls" compilations, although their uptempo punkish and countrified tracks don't fare as well. (JB) (International Trash/PO Box 41/Prahan 3181/AUSTRALIA)



FLATLINERS

"What A Waste" CD

Texas band...hmmm. As usual, the stuff that ADD Records puts out is pretty straightforward old-school punk. This is no exception,

they follow the punk rules but somehow make it sound fresh. Punk rock anthems for a generation that missed it the first time around. (SB)

(ADD/PO Box 701781/San Antonio, TX 78270)

FLESHIES/JOCKS

"Playdough" 7" EP

Two thrashy and spastic Bay Area bands. Both are obnoxious and fun. If you know what a geek fest is, these kids rule those kinda shows. (JC)

(Spam/PO Box 21588/El Sobrante, CA 94820)

FLIES

"Complete Collection 1965-68" LP

Known for their slowed-down psychedelic version of "Steppin' Stone", these Brits helped define the term "freakbeat" with their manic energy and mostly raunchy mod-psych sound. Besides that song, you also get trippy tunes like "The Magic Train", "House Of Love", "Alexander Bell Believes", and "A Hymn With Love." The full story of the band is told in the sleeve notes of this humdinger collection. (AW)

(ACME Deluxe/PO Box 248/Sevenoaks, Kent TN14 6WT/ENGLAND)



FUSES

"Are Lies" CD

What year was this recorded? This year? Are you sure? This sounds like GANG OF FOUR or WIRE, with the vocals and attitude of the ADICTS.

Great songs, great recordings. (BAM) (Reptilian/403 S. Broadway/Baltimore, MD 21231)

FURY 66

"No Perfect Machine" CD

This is the repressing of the first FURY 66 full-length with 4 extra songs, all of which were previously released on comps and EPs despite the blurb on the cover. For those of you who haven't already heard FURY 66, they play melodic hardcore. (JDC) (Half Pint/PO Box 4112/Santa Cruz, CA 95063)

FOREIGN LEGION

"Punkrock Jukebox" 7" EP

This single is better than their last one, but it's still nothing spectacular. The songs are a bit more driving, especially "Alright (Stick Together)", which is actually pretty fucking good. Apparently these guys used to kick some major ass back in the day, so look for them on tour this February with MAJOR ACCIDENT. (JAW)

(DSS/PO Box 739/4021 Linz/AUSTRIA)



GAMEFACE

"Always On" CD

Another new release, perhaps a tad more melancholy and mid-paced than their previous records. But as always, awash with guitars, harmony, and

melody. Reminiscent of a more lushly-textured REPLACEMENTS in their later years. Definitely a down record, but a disc one can snuggle up to as well! (RK)

(Revelation/PO Box 5232/Huntington Beach, CA 92615)

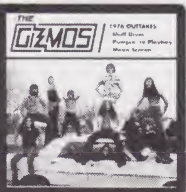


GARDENIAN

"Sindustries" CD

Now this REALLY kicks ass! Growling vocals talk you through the saw blades of riffs that push you closer and closer to the

meatgrinder which awaits you. Awesome playing throughout this album. The style borrows from both that old school metal riffology and the new school vocal and orchestral compositions. (MD) (Nuclear Blast/PO Box 43618/Philadelphia, PA 19106)



GIZMOS

"1976 Outtakes" 7" EP

What we've got here are terrific outtakes from one of the early GIZMOS recording sessions. This

quintessential pre-punk garage band will once again delight listeners with their alternate renditions of classics such as "Muff Divin'" and "Pumpin' to Playboy". If you haven't heard these amazing songs before, now's your chance to make up for lost time. (JB)

(Hate/Cir.ne Gianicolense 112/00152 Roma/ITALY)

GLEN & THE PEANUTBUTTER MEN

"Night Of The Living Drunks" CD

These guys are Australian, and their sound is from the good old days of English punk circa 1982-84. The singer reminds me of Olga from the TOY DOLLS; similar sense of humor, too, only not as quirky. Yep, this is a keeper. (SB) (Noise Pollution/PO Box 5093/East Cheltenham 3192/AUSTRALIA)

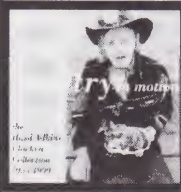


GRAVE DANGER

"s/t" CD

A solid release and an interesting mix of surf and rockabilly. These guys have that whole "dragsters and graveyard" theme going for

them, which should be a good indication of where they're coming from musically. The recording lacks punch, but I'm sure these guys are good live and there's a nice VENTURES cover to boot. (MC) (Rustic/PO Box 15225/Phoenix, AZ 85060)



HASIL ADKINS

"Poultry in Motion" CD

If you only buy one "Songs About Chicken" record this year, I'd say this is your best bet. I know, it's a really tough decision in such a

crowded genre. Anyway, Norton has assembled a 15 song compilation of 1956-1999 tunes on one-man-band/madman Adkins' favorite topic. One man's roots rock obsession, documented and collected in one easy place. (MC) (Norton/PO Box 646, Cooper Station/New York, NY 10276)

HELLACOPTERS

"High Visibility" double LP

It took me a few plays to get into the new double LP by the 'COPTERS, but I find myself enjoying it more every time I throw it on. There's more of a hard rock sound going on here, although plenty of their trademark Detroit/Aussie-influenced tuneage is present as well. "You're Too Good (To Me Baby)" sounds uncannily like early KISS, while another real surprise is the very GRAHAM PARKER-ish "No Song Unheard". (AW)

(Sweet Nothing/Universal, no address)

HILLSTREET STRANGLERS

"Drunken Stupor" CD EP

Ooooh, aggressive boy-rock with a chick drummer. She's good too. Very convincing singer, here. Somebody better keep an eye on him...he could be dangerous. The other singer sounds a bit like Jello Biafra. This is a good rockin' band which isn't afraid to punk out AND have tempo changes. (SB) (Hillstreet Stranglers/PO Box 6603/Oceanside, CA 92058)

THE HOPE CONSPIRACY

"Coldblue" CD

The fact that they use the word "conspiracy" in their name, like countless other bands, doesn't give them pre-listening points. The music is pretty heavy in that chugga chugga hardcore vein, and has screamed/yelled vocals, some of which are actually kind of humorous. This release is very well produced, tight and solid, but it's not really my thing. (JDC)

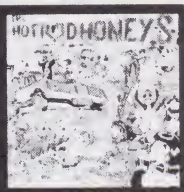
(Equal Vision/PO Box 14/Hudson, NY12534)

HOSTILE AMISH

"Olde Order Of Amish" CD

Talk about an underground band that were much in need of a re-issue. HOSTILE AMISH were/are a hilarious DEAD MILKMAN-type band straight out of Amish country. Rebels to their butter churns, H.O. rocked the barns of Ohio like no one before or since. This CD compiles their 4 self-released tapes and includes all of their hits. My personal favorites are "Lizard Up My Butthole" and "Who Put Sea Monkeys In Mom's Douche?". (JC)

(Jim Clevo Presentations/PO Box 110161/Cleveland, OH 44111)



HOT ROD HONEYS

"Adios, Farewell, Goodbye... So Long" 7" EP

A good rockin' band from Belgium doing all covers (I think), of which BUCK

OWENS' title track is my favorite. This is far grittier and way better than the other release on this label that I reviewed for this issue. (JC)

(Badman/Via Roma 88/15040 Castelletto Monf. (AI)/ITALY)

Hot Water Music

"Never Ender" CD

So what happens when one of the hardest-working bands in show business collect all of

their singles and comp tracks over the last few years, wrap 'em all in a lavish package featuring goofy-ass pictures of the lads and bonus fold-out Scott Sinclair art? Pure motherfucking bliss, kids. You already know what these guys sound like. If you don't, start with '99's "No Division" - though with tracks like "Alachua" "Never Ender" and "Us & Chuck", this isn't a bad intro to the band, either. If there was one record I was looking forward in in 2000, this was it - and you know what? It doesn't disappoint. Own it. (DGJ) (No Idea / PO Box14636 / Gainesville, FL 32604)



HUMAN BUFFET

"Man Sized Habit" 7" EP

The first release in years to feature Joey Image from the MISFITS, which alone will sell a bunch of

records. The other thing that will is that this is cool trashed-out rock'n'roll in a NEW YORK DOLLS meats G.G. ALLIN vein. Right on the money. (JC)

(Transparent/6759 Transparent Drive/Clarkston, MI 48346)

HUNGER

"Strictly From Hunger/The Unreleased Album" LPs

HUNGER hailed from Portland, OR and moved to L.A., where they cut this excellent psych album that featured stand-out and often comped tracks like "Colors", "Workshop", and "Mind Machine". An exact repro of that rare-as-fuck album, with one bonus track/alternate take of "The Truth", is packaged in a slip case with a band history insert and another album. The second LP is the version that was supposed to be released back in the '60s, which featured the guitar talents of Ed King of the STRAWBERRY ALARM CLOCK. (AW)

(AKRMA/PO Box 27/19100 La Spezia/ITALY)



INSOMNIACS

"Get Something Going" CD

An excellent new Mod ñ or should that be neo-Mod ñ release from the wilds of New Jersey! The INSOMNIACS not only

have a heavy sound, aggressive vocals, and loud guitars, traits which are more characteristic of the original Mod groups than most of their '79-81 British successors, but they also manage to write some really catchy originals. Check out tracks like "Funkenstein" and "Tomorrow isÖ" and see for yourself. (JB)

(Estrus/PO Box 2125/Bellingham, WA 98227)

REVIEWS

ITS ALL MEAT

"S/T" LP

This elusive IT'S ALL MEAT album, one of Canada's rarest, has been reissued in a gorgeous gatefold sleeve with a bonus single. Cut in 1970, it sounds more like '67/'68 stuff, though there's certainly some hard rock tendencies here and there. Mostly its great heavy psych, with lots of cool organ work and a noticeable psychedelic-period ANIMALS influence (probably they took their name from THE ANIMALS song of the same name). The bonus single features their earlier cut garage-monster song, one of the best of the genre if ya ask me. (AW) (no label, no address)

THE JAZZ JUNE

"The Medicine" CD

This record is an indie-rock masterpiece. All the necessary angst mixed with self deprecating insight can be found here, along with the anthemic power chords that will slowly chip your little beef-jerky of a heart out. If you like POLVO and that Chapel Hill sound, check this out. (SB)

(Initial/PO Box 17131/Louisville, KY 40217)



THE JULIANA THEORY

"Emotion Is Dead" CD

These guys are the BACKSTREET BOYS of emo rock, which is evident especially in "Don't Push Love Away." This release is

quite an improvement from their last release, but there is something about it that just doesn't completely appeal to me. The recording is very, very produced, and the songs are well constructed, but the feel is pretty goofy. (JDC)

(Tooth and Nail/PO Box 12698/Seattle, WA 98111)



KICKED IN THE HEAD

"Thick As Thieves" CD

First off, this band is called KICKED IN THE HEAD and there are lots of people throwing the Satan hand sign on a picture inside.

That said, they are some sort of a RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE/SHELTER/YOUTH OF TODAY hybrid. They aren't terrible musicians, and it sounds like they are off to a good start with what they are trying to do, but I just am not into it. (JDC)

(Kickedintheheadquarters/202 Whitwell Street/Quincy, MA 02169)

SHITLIST

MA 02145)



KID CHAOS

"Love In The Time Of Scurvy" CD

These guys have lots of influences showing through in their music. At first it struck me as a

decent mix of RANCID and the RAMONES with somewhat snotty vocals, but considering the fact that there are horns throughout the majority of the record, I would compare them to LINK 80: a lot of different sounding songs that are all pretty mediocre. (JDC)

(Vile Beat/PO Box 42462/Washington, DC 20015)

KINKS

"The 'New' Great Lost Kinks Album" CD

An amazing 30-track collection of KINKS rarities, demos, and alternate versions that escaped the reissue net on those legit KINKS CD reissues. This is worth it just for songs like "She's Got Everything", "And I Will Love You", "Berkley Mews", and "Time Will Tell".

Also included are some fascinating RAY DAVIES demos of songs he gave to other people to record and early (pre-KINKS) RAVENS acetates! Wonderful for the KINKS collector! (AW)

(Poobah Reckids/no address)



KUNG-FU U.S.A.

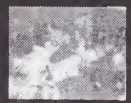
"In the Pink" CD

Not really as much fun as the record cover suggests. Instead, we get plodding, over-syncopated, moody, and freaky indie-punk. Not

thrilling, although not particularly bad either. Track 5 ("The Finger") shows some spark, and the band might have some promise in the future. (JC)

(Rodent/250 Napoleon Street #N/San Francisco, CA 94124)

LAST STAND



ANY BATTLE WON

LAST STAND

"Any Battle Won" CD

This is amazing! This reminds me of the big rock anthems that ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT would come up with (e.g.,

"French Guy", "Dollar", etc.). Fans of ROCKET, JAWBREAKER, and PEGBOY need to track this down. You will be forever grateful. (BAM)

(One Way/324 Broadway/Somerville,



LEIAH

"The Tigra Songs" CD

LEIAH appear to be from Sweden, but their music should be grouped into the whole emo/indie category.

The slower stuff on the record is very reminiscent of MINERAL, with similar guitar lines and drawn out vocals, whereas the mid-tempo parts and songs draw references from the GET UP KIDS' earlier material. The musicianship is pretty clean with the exception of a few kind of awkward bass lines. (JDC)

(Genet/PO Box 447/9000 Gent 1/BELGIUM)

LEFTOVER CRACK

"Rock the 40 Oz" 7" EP

The first release from a band that evolved from the ashes of CHOKING VICTIM. Thrashy, screamy East Coast punk with a strong sense of humor and melody. Their occasional forays into ska are tempered and brief and thus tend to work well for this band (though definitely not for too many others). (JC)

(Bankshot/no address)

LIQUID LOGIC

"Dis-tor-tions" CD

"Alternative rock" that seems to draw influence from bands like ALICE IN CHAINS and JANE'S ADDICTION. Not very interesting, and with way too many studio effects. (JC)

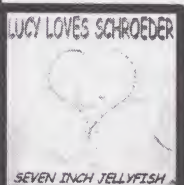
(Engine Group/PO Box 8/New York, NY 10159)

LORD HIGH FIXERS/GORIES

split 7"

Two of the best bands in recent memory caught live. This is available only in issue #9 of *Hate* zine from Italy. Tim Kerr and the LHF showcase their heavy groove in the speedy "The Things She Says", but the GORIES win out here with excellent versions of JOHN LEE HOOKER's "Boogie Chillun" and "I Got Eyes For You." Mick Collins is a god, but you already knew that. (MC)

(Hate/Circ.Gianicolense112/00152 Rome/ITALY)



LUCY LOVES SCHROEDER

"Seven Inch Jellyfish" 7" EP

They have a sound that reminds me of the CHUBBIES meets DISCOUNT. Since I really like both of those bands,

I'm pretty into this 7", which displays pop

sensibilities that have a strong indie churn and burn. (JC)

(Grade 9/PO Box 267/Denton, TX 76202)



MAD PARADE

"Re-Issues" CD

Great mid-80's melodic punk rock like the ADOLESCENTS or D.I., but with the swagger of the ADICTS or CHELSEA. Their

debut LP, their "Thousand Words" LP, their "Right Is Right" EP, and their "Second Chances" EP are all here on one CD. Is it all great? No. Is it worth getting? Hell, yeah! (BAM)

(Dr. Strange/PO Box 700-117/Alta Loma, CA 91701)

MAGGOTS

"Apeman 2000 / Two Ft. Tall" 7"

Excellent trashy garage rock from Germany. Highly recommended. The best line I've heard so far this year is in "Apeman 2000": "If I ever took a shower, the water would need a bath." Now that's dirty. The flipside is a love song for a dwarf girl, and you can't go wrong with love songs about dwarf girls. (JC)

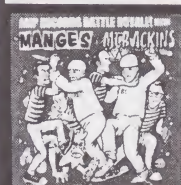
(Screaming Apple/Dustemichstrasse 14/50939 Koln/GERMANY)

MAGNETIC IV

"Teenage Frankenstein" 7" EP

Pretty good 60s-inspired punk with great female vocals. Would fit in fine with the releases on Lipstick Records. Imagine Tina from the BOBBYTEENS fronting for the FEVERS. I'm looking forward to future recordings. (MC)

(Magnetic IV/945 Columbia Street/Houston, TX 77008)



MANGES vs. McRACKINS

split CD
I'm sure I could review this without even listening to it, but that would be depriving myself of some great music. 19 tracks from these two

pop punk legends. The McRACKINS rule North America, while I'm sure that the MANGES have Italy quite worked up over their sounds. A great introduction to both bands if you're still unfamiliar with them. (BAM)

(Amp/92 Kenilworth Avenue S./Hamilton, Ontario L8K 2S9/CANADA)

MASTER MACHANIC

"Kick/Sneeze" 7"

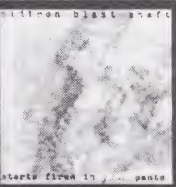
A solid band out of Pittsburgh. They have an

older punk sound somewhat akin to the VKTMS, but not quite as catchy. (JC)
(Master Mechanic/PO Box 4247/Pittsburgh, PA 15203)

ME FIRST

"Sorry Hangover" CD

I don't know how Long Gone John does it, but he's unearthed yet another band with a prominent "girl group" vibe. This 4-piece features a rockin' frontwoman, a twin guitar attack, and some pop stylings. The first song ("Chase My Tail") is so damn good that it makes the rest seem more pedestrian, but the title track and "Two of Everything" (with its killer chorus) also stand out. (JB)
(Sympathy for the Record Industry)



MIDIRON BLAST SHAFT "Starts Fires In Your Pants" CD

Imagine REDMPTION 87 or YOUTH OF TODAY covering FUGAZI's more math rock-oriented songs. Scream s plenty! Fans of the aforementioned groups or the REFUSED should give this CD a listen. (BAM)
(Reptilian/403 S. Broadway/Baltimore, MD 21231)

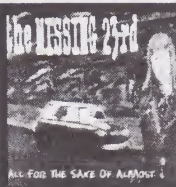
MIDNIGHT EVILS

"Ain't Got Time For Love/Beating Around The Bush" 7"

Thrashy rock and roll with its roots firmly planted in the classics. The A-side is a killer with real snotty vocals, whereas the B-side is a solid AC/DC cover. Well worth checking out. (JC)
(Dart/PO Box 1843/ Fargo, ND 58107)

MILE MARKER/YELLOW ROAD PRIEST split 7" EP

MILEMARKER are a quality artsy noise outfit. They use an interesting array of samples from the likes BOB DYLAN, NEUROSIS and Bishop Clifford Butler, amongst others, to weave a compelling 7" side. YELLOW ROAD PRIEST play a more straightforward screamy hardcore with a firm political agenda, and are also pretty good. (JC)
(Elgin/1550 Easy Street/Elgin, IL 60123)



MISSING 23RD "All For The Sake Of Almost" 7" EP

Raging skaterock/hardcore that falls somewhere between FURY 66 and PROPAGHANDI. A highly-energetic band that knows how to write good

songs. Limited hand-numbered colored vinyl. (JC)
(Sessions/www.sessions.com)

MISTREATERS

"Stranded" 7" EP

I dig Big Neck records. They are a fun label with a quality roster of bands. The MISTREATERS play lo-fi garage rootsy garage stuff that reminds me of POISON 13. A cool record, and I especially dug the classic back cover shot. (JC)
(Big Neck/PO Box 8144/Reston, VA 20195)



MODERN LOVERS

"The Original Tapes" CD

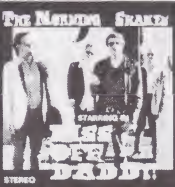
This CD contains MODERN LOVERS demos dating from 1972 or 1973, which were recorded with the help of Kim Fowley. The band's singer/songwriter/guitarist JONATHAN RICHMAN had a knack for writing catchy 3-minute pop songs, which seemed radical back in the stoned-out, laid-back, prog-rockin' early 70s, but he was also clever enough to add some guitar oomph and imitate LOU REED's and IGGY's vocal inflections. Hence he was one of the forerunners of the punk/New Wave/power pop explosion a few years later, and now you too can get a dose of his sparkling early material. (JB)
(Bomp/PO Box 7712/Burbank, CA 91510)



MOON

"Get it Through Your Heart" CD

The "Play This Album Softly" instructions included in this CD are misleading. Softly gets you nowhere at all, since it's a successful blend of elements from the KINKS and WHO with the pop of today. MOON has a good guitar sound and great vocal harmonies, but I could do without the occasional cello and fiddle. (MC)
(Zone 8/PO Box 549/Granville, WV 26534)



MORNING SHAKES

"Piss Off Daddy" 7"

The A-side is full-on JOHNNY THUNDERS slop with tons of vocal attitude that fits perfectly into the HUMBERS/DEVIL DOGS school. There's also a nice, crunchy production by ex-DEVIL DOG Steve Baise. Tack on a straightforward ZERO BOYS cover on the flip, and you've got yourself a solid, rockin' 45. (MC)

REVIEWS

(Get Hip/PO Box 666/Canonsburg, PA 15317)

MORTICIA'S LOVERS/SUPERFLY T.N.T'S "Is Elvis Dead? Yes!" 7" EP

Two bands share this slab of vinyl. MORTICIA'S LOVERS showcase two fast numbers, including a rockabilly-influenced punk original and an uptempo cover of the BUZZCOCKS' "Boredom". The SUPERFLY T.N.T.'S offer two heavier songs, one that's mid-tempo and one that's a bit more boisterous ("Deader Than Disco"); the latter is the standout track on this EP. (JB)
(Perdurabo/c/o Luca Rossi/Via Zanoia 4/28887 Omegna/ITALY)

MOTOFUX

"The Message Conveyed" CD

Fairly average skate punk. They alternate between sounding almost dead-on like old A.F.I. and S.N.F.U.. Maybe if they used initials for their band name, their music would also come across more strongly. Then again (JC)
(Motofux/RR#1/Gawinstown NoG IYL/?)

MOUNT MCKINLEYS

"Left Hand Controls Volume, Right Hand Controls Pitch" 7"

A really cool band which is unfortunately now defunct. A mostly instrumental, 60's-inspired outfit that played semi-experimental garage rock that fits somewhere between MAN OR ASTROMAN and the LORD HIGH FIXERS. (JC)
(Anthraxite/PO Box 10785/Pittsburgh, PA 15203)



MUD CITY MANGLERS "Heart Full of Hate" CD

Lowdown and dirty punk'n'roll of the sort that only Midwesterners seem to be able to effortlessly generate. The MANGLERS sure do sound like they have a bad attitude, but they also write good songs, have a sense of humor, and display some bitchin' guitar pyrotechnics. Listen to this at home in your trailer with a fifth of Jack Daniels in your hand and a toothless wench in your lap. (JB)
(International Trash/PO Box 41/Prahran 3181/AUSTRALIA)



MY SO-CALLED BAND "The Punk Girl Next Door" CD

Weak, uninspired tunes.

SHITLIST

lacking in testicular fortitude. This band should stop watching so much TV and start listening to more punk records. (JC)
(Yesha, Inc./PO Box 31725/Charlotte, NC 28231)



MYSTICK KREWE OF CLEARLIGHT "s/t" CD

Here comes the fuzz-toned acid reflux sounds of M.K.O.C. working their way into your skull. Members of DOWN, CROWBAR, and EYEHATEGOD have created an incredible piece of work. Ross Karpelman's keyboards add that DEEP PURPLE edge, while smokey guitar riffs keep the trip going. This is a great rock album even though there is not a single vocal track on this disc! Weird but great. (MD)
(Tee Pee/PO Box 20307/New York, NY 10009)

NIPS

"The Tits Of Soho" LP

The NIPS, who started life as the NIPPLE ERECTORS, featured future POGUES frontman Shane McGowan and cranked out trashy garage rock cum punk over four extremely rare singles between '78 and '81. This "reissue" collects all four singles and adds six live cuts to the stew. You can't go wrong with the punked-out rockabilly leanings of "King Of The Bop" or "All The Time In The World". Yeah, baby! (AW)
(Bovver Boot Company/no address)

NOMEANSNO

"One" CD

The new release from NOMEANSNO, big deal right? They put out an album every year, so how exciting could this one be? In actuality this is the strongest release from them in years, driving, powerful, and adventurous. The originals are great, their reworking of MILES DAVIS' "Bitches Brew" with added vocals was pretty staggering, and their maudlin cover of the RAMONES' "Beat On The Brat" was just downright disturbing. (JC)
(Alternative Tentacles/PO Box 419092/San Francisco, CA 94141)



NOTAWORD

"Four From Fortieth" CD EP

The songs here are mid-tempo, somewhat driving, and very melodic with

personal lyrics, and their sound could be described as progressive pop punk. They remind me of the more modern pop punk bands with an edge, like TURNEDOWN or the LONELY KINGS, while drawing influences from bands like ALL/DSCENDENTS or JAWBREAKER. (JDC)
(Double Zero/PO Box 7122/Algonquin, IL 60122)



OLNEYVILLE SOUND SYSTEM

"On Safari" CD

I hope I never wind up in Olneyville, wherever that is. This is annoying right out of the gate, and it holds tight to the last nerve, throttling me within an inch of sanity. I hear ñ forgive me, Mark E. Smith ñ but I can hear some possible FALL influences. Their "art-rock" angle doesn't really work, and my suck-o-meter is now broken. (SB)
(Heparin/PO Box 29447/Providence, RI 02909)

OPPRESSED LOGIC

"It's Harrassment" LP

For more details on this you can check out the review I did for the CD 2 issues back. I guess this second review is just to let you know that Beer City put it out on vinyl. In a nutshell, this is the best thing that this band has put out. Vinyl rules, so go grab a copy. (JC)
(Beer City/PO Box 26035/Milwaukee, WI 53226)



OOZZIES

"Nation Out Of Hand" CD

The OOZZIES play a melodic, way fast version of tough streetpunk. Driving tunes, and a high-energy live show to back them up.

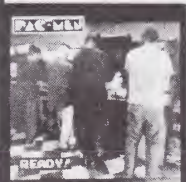
(JC)

(Industrial Strength/2824 Regatta Blvd/Richmond, CA 94804)

OUTFACE

"TV Generation" 7" EP

Raging French hardcore that sounds somewhere between B.G.K. and POISON IDEA. A very solid release if you like thrash punk. (JC)
(Panx/BP 5058/31033 Toulouse Cedex/France)

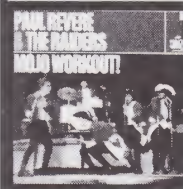


PAC-MEN

"Ready" 7" EP

A pretty cool old-school punk record in the MISFITS

vein. The low production job buries almost everything, but I think that underneath it all there might well be a pretty promising, fun band. (JC)
(Red Tape/PO Box 4468/Danbury, CT 06813)



PAUL REVERE & THE RAIDERS

"Mojo Workout!" double CD

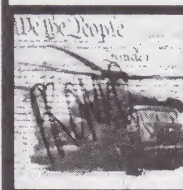
What a class-A package from Sundazed! 44 early '60s R'n B workouts recorded either live or in the studio at rehearsals, plus album and singles sides! This is an extended version of the "Here They Come" album, originally released in '64, and boy does it rock. Lotsa organ, wailing sax, and crazed covers galore, so grab this and have yourselves a Crisco party! (AW)
(Sundazed/PO Box 85/Coxsackie, NY 12051)



PANTY RAID

"The Secret's Out" 7" EP

Snotty lo-fi punk rock which is trashy and obnoxious, just as I like it. I will even let them get away with their wholesale rip off of the B 52s "Rock Lobster" riff in their "I Wanna Be Your Tiger" track. Highly recommended. (JC)
(Raw Sugar/PO Box 53011/New Orleans, LA 70153)



PATRIOT

"We The People" CD

PATRIOT play your standard, rather melodic street punk fare. Nothing here is over-the-top amazing, and nothing is

horrifying. These guys certainly don't suck, but they're just another band playing more of the same CLASH-inspired rock. Their more rock-n-roll shit gets me moving a bit more. (JAW)
(?)

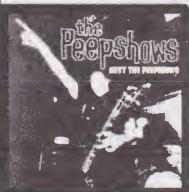


PEEPS

"Talk of the Neighborhood/I Like It" 7"

This entertaining girl garage band is impossible not to like. The A-side is powered by the same great

guitar riff as the UNDERTONES' "Teenage Kicks", but it's wedded to girly vocals and an entirely different chorus. "I Like It" likewise borrows a riff from the DEAD BOYS' "All By Myself", but then is suddenly transformed into an altogether different song structure. (JB)



PEEPSHOWS
"Meet the Peepshows" 7"
EP

More bigtime crunch punk from one of Sweden's best new bands. This release contains two tracks from their "Right About Now" CD EP, plus one unreleased number and another song from their "Mondo Deluxe" LP. All of them rock like hell and could easily blow out your speakers if you're not careful. (JB) (Glazed/PO Box 82006/Columbus, OH 43202)

PEEPSHOWS

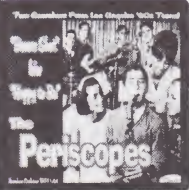
"Right About Now" CD EP

If you're looking for a first rate example of today's Euro power chord rock, look no further. Sweden's PEEPSHOWS crank out six badass r'n'r numbers featuring super crunchy guitars and great tunes. One of the many bands inspired by the wonderful TURBONEGRO, but (mercifully) without the metal damage. (JB) (Sidekicks/Ostra Nobelgatan 9/70361 Orebro/SWEDEN)



PENNYWISE
"Live @ The Key Club" CD
17 tracks, spanning their entire recorded career, with a MINOR THREAT cover

thrown in for good measure. As you would expect, the playing/performance is flawless. Lots of energy, crowd noise, singing along, and no overdubs, which is a blessing. I guess live albums are really for the fans, and this won't disappoint. (RK) (Epitaph/2798 Sunset Blvd./Los Angeles, CA 90026)



PERISCOPES
"Beaver Shot/Happy To Be" 7"

The PERISCOPES were a bunch of clean-cut L.A. boys in 1964, so it's hard to believe that they were responsible for creating "Beaver Shot", a totally lewd and fantastic garage ditty. What the world needs is more garage bands playing dirty songs at their high school track meets! The flip rocks as well. A must for pelt lovers. (MC) (Bacchus Archives/PO Box 1975/Burbank, CA 91507)

THE PICTS



PICTS

"To Stand And Fight Against The Corrupt Police State" 7"

This is a fun record. HC punk in the MINOR THREAT style on a blue vinyl 7" that's limited to 300 copies. Well worth ordering. (BAM) (Super Pezhead/225 14th Street/New Orleans, LA 70124)



PINKOS

"s/t" 7"EP

A pretty eclectic 4-song EP from ex-members of BELL and the GITS. The "Pinkos Theme Song" starts things off well in a punky, female vocal fashion, whereas the remaining three tunes feature acoustic guitars and sound like 4 NON BLONDES or something. I'd like to hear more stuff along the lines of the promising lead track. A rare miss for Empty. (MC) (Empty/PO Box 12034/Seattle, WA 98102)

PIRANHAS

"Piranhas Attack" LP

More scorching rock'n'roll from Tom Perkins Records. This has a cool organ sound and is definitely pretty garage-y sounding, yet to dismiss this record as just that would be to totally miss the point. This is ultra stripped-down, blistering, vaguely arty rock'n'roll with some really trashy guitar and vocals. (JAW) (Tom Perkins Records/POB 970936/Ypsilanti, MI 48197)

POISON IDEA

"The Best Of Poison Idea" CD

Not necessarily a "best of" ñ it's more of a compilation of "Kings Of Punk", "Record Collectors Are Pretentious Assholes", the "Fearing To Scream" EP, and the "Pick Your King" EP. Sure, that's mostly a "best of", but they had some other great tunes too. Forty tracks from one of the greatest hardcore bands ever, so I'm not complaining. (JC) (Taang/706 Pismo Court/San Diego, CA 92109)

PROFITS

"Profit Over People" CD

What it lacks in ingenuity, it easily makes up for in attitude and spunk. You're not going to get much more than 3-chord streetpunk style, but its played with real tenacity. (JC) (Rodent Popsicle/PO Box 1143/Allston, MA 02134)

PROPAGANDHI

"Today's Empires, Tomorrow's Ashes" CD

Off the radar for damn near five years, the Winnepegan Vegans are back with an absolute vengeance on their latest disc. The addition of Todd the Rod on bass only sharpens their attack. This record, while not as knee-jerk as '96's "Less Talk, More Rock", is just as pissed off and just as political. The sense of humor's still there, and if what I saw back in '95 at Gilman is any indication, these guys are a force to be reckoned with live. Prepare to be thrashed. (DGJ) (Fat / PO Box 460144 / SF CA 94146)

PURE RUBBISH

"Tejas Waste" CD EP



Three young teens and their "dad" bash out six punk rock tunes with verve and a nice heavy sound. With t-shirt and cover references to the DEAD

BOYS, the YARDBIRDS, the WHO, and D-GENERATION, you can't go too wrong, and PURE RUBBISH don't. Some of the lead breaks are overly metallic, but the songs are nonetheless rockin' (especially "Johnny Attitude" and "Maximum Boy"). (JB) (One Hit/4400 Memorial #1041/Houston, TX 77007)

RADIO BIRDMAN

"Burn My Eye" 7" EP

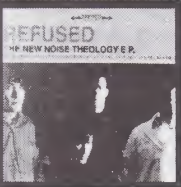
What a great fucking record to bootleg. As you prolly know, the very STOOGES/Detroit-influenced RADIO BIRDMAN was one of the BEST Orstralian bands of the late 70s era, and this baby proves it. This is the proverbial real deal, a fantastic record that includes "Smith and Wesson Blues", "Snake", "I-94", and my personal fave, "Burned My Eye". If you've never heard BIRDMAN, do yourself a favor and track this down. (JAW) (no address)

RED STARS

"We Lost/Welcome to the Party" 7"

Wild, totally rockin' stuff from a locale where the heat and humidity warps minds. "We Lost" has a slight punkabilly feel, whereas the flip is straightforward p-rock. Both feature a primitive sound and manic, pounding drumming which I really like. (JB) (Far Out/PO Box 14361/Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33302)

SHITLIST

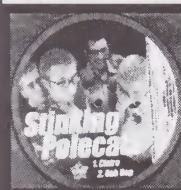


REFUSED

"The New Noise Theology" CD EP

This was apparently recorded along with "The Shape Of Punk To Come" CD that this amazing band

released. While it contains some material from the album, fans of that long-player should pick this up as well. More well thought out hardcore that's flawlessly fused with elements of rock, jazz, electronica, techno, and more. The singer now fronts the (INTERNATIONAL) NOISE CONSPIRACY. (JDC)
(Epitaph/Burning Heart/2798 Sunset Blvd./Los Angeles, CA. 90026)



RETARDED/STINKING POLECATS

split 7"

Golly, we're so very happy about being in a punk band that we might as well play upbeat inoffensive

music based on the BLINK 182 template. We're having so much fun, 'cuz life is just rainbows and good times. Completely generic crap! (JC)
(Badman/Via Roma 88/15040 Castelletto Monf.(Al)/ITALY)



THE RIFFS

"Underground Kicks" CD

The RIFFS borrow heavily from bands like the NY DOLLS, COCKNEY REJECTS, T REX, and DAVID BOWIE. What I

especially like are the THUNDERS-type guitar stylings, but there's something all wrong about this. Unless at least half of these kids are dead already, they're a bunch of poseurs trying a bit too hard to do the wannabe junky-rock thing, which really isn't glamorous. (JAW)
(Pelado/521 W. Wilson #C101/Costa Mesa, CA 92627)

RIOT SQUAD

"Scary Picture Show" 7" EP

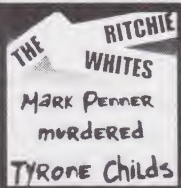
Crackling horror show punk. It sounds a bit like the DAMNED (I was actually surprised to see that they were not English) with a dash of the obligatory MISFITS influence. Entertaining and quite tuneful, which means that fans of the gloomier side of things would dig this. (JC)
(Haunted Town/1658 N. Milwaukee Avenue,

suite #169/Chicago, IL 60647)

RIPPERS

"Xafacaps!" 7" EP

Good dirty sounding Spanish punk. Not too fast or over the top, but still aggressive and chunky. This is a limited edition of 250, so grab this one quick. (JC)
(Ripper/PO Box 11/L'Arboc 43720/Catalonia/SPAIN)



RITCHIE WHITES

"Mark Penner Murdered Tyrone Childs" 7" EP

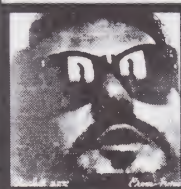
Good catchy, singalong punk. The title track manages to pull off sounding MISFITS-ey while

still sounding original, and the B-side tracks are just as engaging. I look forward to checking out more from these guys. (JC)
(Pelado/521 W. Wilson #C-103/Costa Mesa, CA 92627)

RIVERBOAT GAMBLERS

"Meanmotomachine/Jenna (Is A No Show)" 7"

Good straightforward rock'n'roll from Denton (which, in case you didn't know, actually has a pretty decent scene). The band have definite potential, but they aren't quite there yet. I'm open to checking them out in the future, but I can only give this 4.5 a lukewarm recommendation. (JC)
(Riverboat Gamblers/ 2109 Camellia Street/ Denton, TX 76205)



ROCKET 455

"Cross-Eyed/Headin' For The Texas Border" 7"

A great Detroit area rock'n'roll band kicks out two more killer tunes. This is from 1999, and it's

definitely worth grabbing, along with all of their other releases. (JC)
(Get Hip/PO Box 666/Canonsburg, PA 15317)

RUBBER CITY REBELS

"S/T" CD

A band-sanctioned and -produced CD of this obscure punky powerpop band. More polished than their side of the split LP they did with the BIZARROS back in Akron, but still rockin' stuff. There's a cool cover of "Somebody's Gonna Get Their Head Kicked In Tonight" (FLEETWOOD MAC), an excellent version of "Paper Doll" (a song that Jack Lee of the NERVES wrote for 'em), hilarious originals like "Childeaters" and "Young and Dumb", and covers of SEX PISTOLS, STONES,

and ALICE COOPER songs. (AW)
(Mind Control
Labs/www.rubbercityrebels.com)

SANCTIONS/JIM & THE LORDS

"Then Came The Electric Prunes" LP

Most garage connoisseurs are well aware of the ELECTRIC PRUNES, and here for the first time ever is an LP of pre-PRUNES music from two early versions of the band. The SANCTIONS specialized in crude cover versions of songs by LITTLE RICHARD, the COASTERS, the BEATLES, and LINK WRAY, and of course, the obligatory version of "Louie Louie" is present. Better still are the four songs by JIM & THE LORDS, all of which are covers except for an early version of the first PRUNES single, "Little Olive". (AW)
(Heartbeat Prods./www.heartbeat-productions.co.uk)

SANITY ASSASSINS

"Live At The CBGB Club In New York" 7" EP

Hard-hitting English punk that features Spike, the singer from BLITZKRIEG. A quality live recording showcasing a raw and aggressive band. The SANITY ASSASSINS are similar to BLITZKRIEG, with added hints of an ANTI-NOWHERE LEAGUE feel on a couple of tracks. (JC)

(Retch/49 Rose Crescent/Woodvale, Southport/Merseyside PR8 3RZ/ENGLAND)



SCHINDLER

"Transverse Mercator" CD

This thing is really not good. It sounds like a more punk version of GODSMACK or something along those lines. The guitar lines are

really generic and repetitive, and the lyrics to the chorus of the first song are "I'm a bullet proof man, and I know what I am." (JDC)
(Golf Unit 15 Business Estate/Hithercroft/Wallingford, Oxon, OX10 9DD/ENGLAND)

SCIENTISTS

"S/T" LP

The SCIENTISTS are mostly known, and for good reason, as major players in the Aussie scene as early art/grunge/noisemakers. What some people may not know is that they began as a more conventional power pop outfit influenced heavily by the FLAMIN' GROOVIES. This rare LP, recorded in '79 and '81, features the first line-up with Ben Jupiter on guitar and future HOODOO GURU James Baker on drums, and though there's plenty of fuzz and aggressive playing it's almost like hearing a different band. (AW)
(no label, no address)

**SEWERGROOVES****"Living In Another World / Ending My Days" 7"**

Damn, this record is really dirty-sounding. Remember those records that the NEW BOMB TURKS recorded in their kitchen a

few years ago? This 7" is dirtier than those, and features an even more sleezed-out rock'n'roll band doing the playing. (JC) (Pitshark/BP 68/75961 Paris Cedex 20/France)

LES SEXAREENOS**"Live In the Bed" CD**

Out of the ashes of the great SPACESHITS arose LES SEXAREENOS. The former were a hard act to follow, but the latter stay true to their great sound, but with the addition of sax and a lot of Farfisa organ pounding. The MUMMIES are a fitting comparison here. Definitely one of the best records in 2000. (MC)

(http://www.sympathyrecords.com)

SHE-DEVILS**"La Piel Dura" CD**

Dead-cool garage punk rock from Argentina. You're probably thinking that this is an all-female band, but you're wrong again, slick. The only Devilette is the singer, but apparently the other two fellows are secure enough in their masculinity to be in a band called the SHE-DEVILS. They sing in Spanish, which makes it sound cooler for some reason. (SB)

(C.C. 16 Suc 27B/1427 Capital Federal/ARGENTINA)

SHERYL CRO(W) MAGS**"#1 Hit/Watch For Repetition" 7"**

This is brilliant. Brilliant band name, brilliant label name, and most importantly, brilliant songs. Chris from HOT WATER MUSIC and Bill from RADON converge on this project. While this band is rumored to indulge heavily in the sport of drinking, the songs are unbelievably tight and well-written. More straightforward and punk than their other bands. (BAM) (Cro(w)s and Pawns/116 NW 13th Street #141/Gainesville, FL 32601)

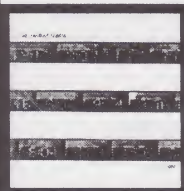
LE SHOK**"She Prefers Whips/Queen Bee vs. Killer Bee" 7"**

Is this art for punk's sake or punk for art's sake? Either way I dig it, and even though the whole record clocks in at about a minute I still heartily recommend it. Fucked-up new wave punk for the year 2001. (JC) (Tiger Suit/PO Box 15482/ Long Beach, CA

90815)

SHORT FUSES**"Get the Hell Down" CD**

At times appealing rock'n'roll crunch, overlaid by a tough-sounding female vocalist. This type of music very often straddles that fine line between killer rockin' stuff and dull bar band material. Although some of the songs here unfortunately fall into the latter category, still others are really excellent (especially "Bored"). (JB) (Sympathy for the Record Industry)

**SIG TRANSIT GLORIA****"2/8/2000" CD**

It's 2001, so we need a new category for music like this. Rock artists like FLEETWOOD MAC and JAMES TAYLOR are

classified as soft rock because their pop sensibilities are non-threatening and easy on the ears. Bands like this should from now on be referred to as soft punk. Squeaky clean and non-threatening, these guys could be any girl's best friend. The tunes fall somewhere between WEEZER and the TRAVOLTAS, although not as engaging. (JC) (Johans Face/PO Box 479164/Chicago, IL 60647)

**SILVER TONGUED DEVIL****"Six Pack Ride/Ring My Bell" 7"**

Fast-paced over-the-top rock'n'roll of the sort that's become rather popular of late. Think ZEKE and the

HELLCOPTERS. But like a lot of bands jumping on the guitar-soloing, devil-horns-in-the-air big rock bandwagon, these guys kinda get lost in the crowd. The B-side track is the better of the two, but it's a cover rather than an original. (JC) (Safety Pin/PO Box 51241/28080 Madrid/SPAIN)

SIR DOUGLAS QUINTET**"Öis Back!" CD**

Unlike their "Best ofÖ" LP, this CD contains a hodgepodge of SDQ singles and out-takes. Despite the presence of some boring blues songs, I actually prefer "Öis Back!" to "Best ofÖ", which was thrown together hurriedly to capitalize on the success of "She's About a Mover". Herein one can find several excellent Tex-Mex-cum-British Invasion songs like "Sugar Bee", "We'll Never Tell", and the sublime "In Time", all of which feature the band's trademark Vox organ squeal. (JB) (Beat Rocket/PO Box 85/Coxsackie, NY

REVIEWS

12051)

SIR DOUGLAS QUINTET**"The Best ofÖ" CD**

This 1966 SDQ collection (plus a bonus single) starts off with the band's first big hit, "She's About A Mover", whose primitive riff and organ fills still sound as fresh today as they did back then, and goes on to showcase several other fine rockers in the same vein (e.g., "The Tracker"). There are also various rootsy r'n'r numbers (the best of which is the moody "Blue Norther") along with a couple of slow, bluesy clunkers to be found, all of which feature Doug Sahm's raspy, countrified vocal stylings. Post-BEATLES, but not really all that BEATLESque. (JB) (Beat Rocket/PO Box 85/Coxsackie, NY 12051)

SLAB**SLAB****"Agony Of Da Feet" CD**

Seven tracks of speedy, smooth, well-produced SoCal melodic hardcore. SLAB don't add anything new to the genre, but if you

dig BAD RELIGION, FACE TO FACE, and mid-period UNWRITTEN LAW, you'll not be averse to this. (RK)

(Onset/PO box 1918/Garden Grove, CA 92842)

SLAVES/NOTORIUS**"Teatro Sexy Movie" split 7"**

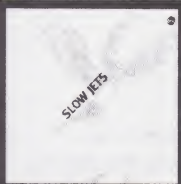
Both bands play dark and creepy punk rock. I think I like NOTORIUS better than the SLAVES, since they sound like a more garagey SAMHAIN with cool keyboards. (JC) (Valium/Via Nomentana 113/00161 Roma/ITALY)

SLIM CESSNA'S AUTO CLUB**"Always Say Please And Thank You" CD**

This is the third record from Jello Biafra's country discovery. Jello says that this is "the country band that plays the bar at the end of the world", and I'm OK with that, cause this is the kind of sing-along, whiskey-snortin' hoe-down that I would want to serenade me out of this cruel world. Hard-luck n' sinners, yodeling and of course, the standard Jesus songs make this a must for every road trip from now until the world really does end. (SB)

(Alternative Tentacles/PO Box 419092/San Francisco, CA 94141)

SHITLIST



SLOW JETS

"Worm Into Phoenix" CD

Pretty good pop on the indie-rock side of things. The sound is disjointed at times, but it's played well. SLOW JET features a few

jazzy guitar breaks, but they are at their best when just doing the straight pop thang. Better than expected. (MC) (Morphious/PO Box 13474/ Baltimore, MD 21203)



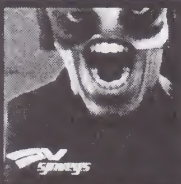
SOMEONE ELSE'S PROBLEM

"Everything Just Needs To Stop" CD

This recording is really poor, and so too is the music. It's "no one else's"

problem but their own. Off-time drums and youth crew shouting vocals are featured between almost every line. Buy a candy bar instead. (JDC)

(One Inch Punch/PO Box 30842/Albuquerque, NM 87190)



SPIVEYS

"V" CD

Nine fast punk/metal tunes with lots of yells and breakdowns, but more metal than punk. It's that "new" metal stuff that

should be filed under the "Sports Bar Metal" category, as I like to call it. At least they're loud, which is more than I can say for a lot of shit these days. (MC)

(doubleplusgood/PO Box 18721/Minneapolis, MN 55418)

SQUIRTGUN/REAL SWINGER

"Live In Italy" split 7"

SQUIRTGUN are in fine form here, and churn out their usual taut brand of rockin pop. The REAL SWINGER play a bit slower, but still have some well-crafted tunes. An exceptionally clear live recording. (JC) (Ballroom Blitz/Via Catullo 44/80122 Napoli/ITALY)

STALK-FOREST GROUP

"Curse of the Hidden Mirrors" CD

Early BLUE OYSTER CULT material from when they were still using an earlier name. Originally recorded for Elektra and more psychedelic than B.O.C., but the trademark

weird lyrics and song structures are still there. Includes an early version of the classic "I'm On The Lamb, But I Ain't No Sheep" (a.k.a. "The Red and The Black"), as well as other killer tunes like "A Fact About Sneakers," "Arthur Comics" and "What is Quicksand?" (AW) (Young Buck, no address)

THE STEAM PIG

"Deep Fried Obedience" CD

Hailing from Ireland, the STEAM PIG play ridiculously fast, super pissed-off, almost hardcore punk rock. This is not really my thing, but if per chance you happen to be into ridiculously fast, super pissed-off, almost hardcore punk rock, you will definitely like this. (JAW)

(Rejected/PO Box 6591/Dun Laoghaire/County Dublin/IRELAND)

STENCH BAND

"Play For Fred" LP

Noisy fucked-up, avant hippie shit. More lame than it is experimental and creative. A couple of decent tracks, but by and largely uninspired and not matching up to its freak out potential. (JC)

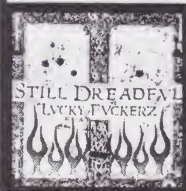
(Zero Street/120 N. 14th/Lincoln, NE 68508)

STILETTOS

"Jerk" 7" EP

This might be a stretch, but to me this band sounds a little like BOB MOULD singing for a trashy rock and roll band. It's good and catchy, but a bit odd-sounding. Don't be put off by the dorky artwork. (JC)

(db's/PO Box 2550/3500 GN Utrecht/HOLLAND)



STILL DREADFUL

"Lucky Fuckerz" CD

I don't know how dreadful these guys were before this album, but they aren't so bad now. Spawned from a VODOO GLOW SKULLS

record label, this mix of straightforward rock and blues has a few DANZIG twinges in the vocals, but delivers good banging material. Great hooks in the songs and tight playing. (MD)

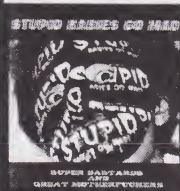
(El Pocho Loco/3838 Jackson Street, suite D/Riverside, CA 92503)

STRAIGHTFACED

"Pulling Teeth" CD

I don't like this at all. It's a sort of hybrid of tough-guy math-rock and crunchy "alternative" modern rock. I'm sure they'd go down really well on the Ozzfest, or in support

of RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE. Of course, these are all the same reasons I would never go to the 'Family Values' tour. (RK) (Epitaph/2798 Sunset Blvd./Los Angeles, CA 90026)



STUPID BABIES GO MAD

"Super Bastards And Great Motherfuckers" 7"

Ranging from CANDY SNATCHERS bar rock to YOUTH OF TODAYs-style HC (minus the breakdowns)

with rock'n'roll lead guitars and lyrics inspired by the almighty G.G. ALLIN himself, you can't go wrong. This is all done by four Japanese guys who managed to come up with one of the greatest band names ever. (BAM) (Acme/PO Box 441/Dracut, MA 01826)

SUBTONIX

"Trophy/Today's Modern Woman" 7"

As I've been saying for some time now, the SUBTONIX rule! Fucked-up New Waveish punk that I would liken to the SCREAMERS meets X RAY SPEX. (Sorry, but the trashed-out saxophone playing and screechy vocals invariably elicit such comparisons.) An excellent first release from a band that has to be seen to be fully appreciated. (JC)

(No Love/PO Box 426828/San Francisco, CA 94142)



SUK

"Suk" CD

The CD scan reads 69 tracks. Sixty-Nine, get it? That's dirty, so this band must be dirty, too. They're also a three-piece that somehow makes all 69

songs sound the same. The lyrics are kinda funny, though. You thought I was gonna make some lame joke about the band being "sucky", didn't you? (SB) (no address)

SYTHETIC 16

"Your Water" CD

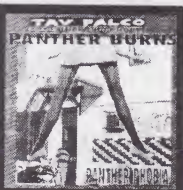
This is really poppy and almost radio-friendly alternative rock. The writing is sound, the vocalist seems heartfelt, and the guitars have a fuzzy,

overdriven sound. Their kind of like an edgier GOO GOO DOLLS. Not bad for this kind of stuff. (JDC)

(Resurrection AD/PO Box 763/Red Bank, NJ 07701)



REVIEWS



TAV FALCO & THE UNAPPROACHABLE PANTHER BURNS "Panther Phobia" CD

Marked as a return to the classic "Behind The Magnolia Curtain" album,

the new offering from TAV and company doesn't disappoint. What is great about the PANTHER BURNS is that they show you exactly how blues gave birth to rock. This is about as pure a rock record as you are likely to hear. There's no ALEX CHILTON backing him this time around; instead, members of '68 COMEBACK, the OBLIVIONS, and the COMPULSIVE GAMBLERS fill the gap. (MC) (<http://www.intheredrecords.com>)

THANES

"It's Just a Fear/Sun didn't Come Out Today" 7"

I don't have too much patience for records by today's neo-60's bands, since most of 'em just don't equal their 60's models. But "It's Just a Fear" is such a fine cover version of the ANSWERS' song, thanks to its catchy riff, background vocals, and melody line, that I'm forced to doff my hat to these Scots. The flip is pretty good, too, but it's tarnished by comparison. (JB)

(Living Eye/c/o Sundazed/PO Box 85/Coxsackie, NY 12051)



THROTTLE "Transporter" CD

I don't know what to tell you, this is potential arena rock, but the college-indie sound is all over it, too.

The songs are interesting enough, especially track 3, but it just doesn't strike me as that unique. It's solid rock with better than average playing and some cool ideas. (SB)

(Curve Of The Earth/1312 Boylston Street/Boston, MA 02215)

TO EACH HIS OWN

"Breaking The Mold" 7" EP

A young East Coast skaterock/hardcore band with some talent and potential. This is an ill-titled 7" though, since there's not too much about this band that really stands out from the pack yet. The energy and skill is there, so we'll have to see where that takes them. (JC) (Resurrection A.D./PO Box 763/Red Bank, NJ 07701)

TORPEDOES

"No Refills" CD

My favorite new Detroit underground

legends, along with the JUNK MONKEYS. Johnny Angelo's brash vocal stylings are not unlike a proto-Scott Drake (HUMPERS) given their catchy-as-hell melodies, and he's backed by a tight, veteran bar band of the HEARTBREAKERS sort. Prior to Johnny's untimely demise, the TORPEDOES seemed destined for stardom, and you should check out this LP since none of your modern-day punk heroes can hold a candle to their song "Pop Star". (JDM)

(www.motorcityjams.com)

TRAITORS/EVIL BEAVER

"Live At The Man Hole" split LP

Extremely drunk, exuberant, and funny live recordings of two good, raunchy punk bands at their silliest. The TRAITORS side is a little more ballistic and rockin', but EVIL BEAVER stand up well as a 2-piece (bass and drums) with a lot of frantic singing. Both bands sound like they put on a hell of a show, and the liner notes are equally entertaining. (JC) (Johanns Face/PO Box 479164/Chicago, IL 60647)

TRAVOLTAS

"Teenbeat" CD

More glistening power pop from these Nordic stalwarts. Multilayered vocals, crisp guitars, and bouncy backbeat drums make this a thoroughly enjoyable, albeit sugar-coated feast. Sha-na-na-na, sha-na-na-na. (JC) (Arcade/99-744 Poko Road/Aiea, HI 96701)

TRAILER PARK TORNADOS

"Heroes of the Hopeless" 7" EP

You should already know about all the great Big Neck releases, and this one is no exception. The T. P. TORNADOS hail from Buffalo and belt out fast and trashy punk rock fueled by loud guitars and beer, not unlike the label's other bands, such as the BASEBALL FURIES. If you were from Buffalo, you'd be drunk and angry too. (MC) (Big Neck/PO Box 8144/Reston, VA 20195)

TRASH BRATS

"Rocket to Heaven/Third Generation Nation" 7"

For years these Detroit BRATS have been putting out hook-filled glam punk records that haven't received sufficient acclaim from dimwitted "rock crits". Maybe this new 45 will turn the tide, since it features both a trashed-out original with a super chorus and a pumped-up rendition of the DEAD BOYS' chestnut. (JB)

(Lawless/PO Box 689/Hingham, MA 02043)

T.V. JONES

"Eskimo Pies/Skimp the Pimp" 7"

A long-lost 1974 Australian recording by one of DENIZ TEK's first bands. Since he soon after went on to form the seminal mid-70's crunch punk band RADIO BIRDMAN, one naturally expects great things from this. And that's exactly what one finds, especially with "Eskimo Pies", an outstanding song which would have fit perfectly on "Radios Appear". This is one you'll definitely want. (JB) (Nomad/PO Box 34829/West Bethesda, MD 20817)

TUMMLER

"Queen To Bishop VI" CD

Space travel on an old Harley while high on peyote, dressed in black leather and denim, with various members of SABBATH and HAWKWIND as your crew might come closest to describing the feel of this disc. Fuzzy blues lace the mood of a space rock opus and solder the riffs into a mighty smokin' rocket engine which propels you into whatever journey you have planned for the evening. Have a nice trip. (MD) (Man's Ruin)

U.F.C.

"Second State" 7" EP

Hell, yeah. These young mohicans got the classic G.B.H./BLITZ punk style down pat. U.F.C. would mix well with current bands like the CASUALTIES and UNSEEN. A limited edition release on colored vinyl. (JC) (Charged/PO Box 157/High Bridge, NJ 08829)



UNFRIENDLYS

"Out Of This World" CD

Clean-sounding rock and roll, trying to sound dirty. Bland tunes that are executed decently enough, but nothing really grabs

your attention about this release. The energy is there, they might be better live. (JC) (Leathur/6037 Voerner/Warren, MI 48091)



UNTIL THE END s/t CD EP

Macho straightedge hardcore stuff with gruff, screamed vocals. The music fluctuates between fast stuff and break downs.

If you like double bass a whole heck of a lot, and old school tattoo artwork, you might actually like this. I suspect that these guys

SHITLIST

something. (JDC)
(Equal Vision/PO Box 14/Hudson, NY12534)

UNCURBED

"...Keeps The Banner High" CD

This record might very well destroy you. An intense barrage of Euro-hardcore that's an absolute assault on the ears. I'm not sure why, but I really enjoyed this powerful and passionate record. (JC)
(Sound Pollution/PO Box 17742/Covington, KY 41017)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Big Bonanza" CD

If you like the Bonanza label, you're in luck, skippy. Two long discs full of miscellaneous bands that all sound alike, more or less. Not bad, mind you...just, well....they're all members of one big, happy family. And that's nice. (SB)
(Bonanza/10 Allee de la Lavande/42650 St. Jean-Bonnefonds/France)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Carbon 14 Hall of Fame" 7" EP

Four older weirdos with borderline psychoses and inner demons that force them to keep on rocking out in their own unique fashions join together on this EP, which came with issue #16 of *Carbon 14* magazine. I'm talking about HASIL ADKINS, ANDRE WILLIAMS, DAVIE ALLAN (and his ARROWS), and JOHNNY LEGEND. If you're one of those culturally-deprived souls who doesn't even know who they are, it's time to find out. (JB)
(Carbon 14/PO Box 29247/Philadelphia, PA 19125)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

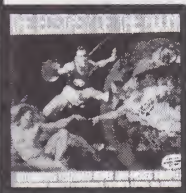
"Cheap Shots and Low Blows, vol. 1" CD

What we have here, obviously, is a good retrospective collection of all the TKO singles from 1997 and 1998. Included are all those highly sought-after punk rock gems like the first ONE MAN ARMY single and the DROPKICK MURPHYS' 7", but the true standouts are the BODIES' now hard-to-find "Suicide" single and the TEMPLARS' "Modern Day Ripper". If you wanna save your hard-earned paper route money, you can get this CD instead of paying \$30 apiece for 'em on ebay. (JAW)
(TKO/4104 24th Street #103/San Francisco, CA 94114)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Cleveland Confidential" CD

Leave it to the fine British label Overground to reissue this classic Clevo-area compilation LP from 1980, and to combine it with the 7" EP of the same name. Like most comps it's a mixed bag that ranges from primo punk blasts from the likes of the PAGANS, the DEFNICS, SEVERE, and the AK-47's which by themselves make it a mandatory purchase to New Wave or arty offerings from outfits like MENTHOL WARS, the STYRENES, and the BRONCOS. Despite the musical diversity it's got a nice garagey feel throughout, so that even the less punky tracks exude an appealingly raw sound. (JB)
(Overground/PO Box 1NW/Newcastle Upon Tyne NE99 1NW/England)



VARIOUS ARTISTS

"The Ecstasy of The Agony" CD

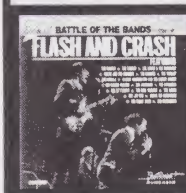
The latest smattering from the Alternative Tentacles roster (wait-where are the DK tracks?). A cool label

with a great blend of classic punk and current innovators, plus spoken word from the likes of NOAM CHOMSKY, MUMIA ABU-JAMAL, and label owner himself, JELLO. Lots of exclusive tracks, as well as solid album tracks. (JC)
(Alternative Tentacles/PO Box 419092/San Francisco, CA 94141)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"The Essential Pebbles, Vol. 3: European Garage" double CD

A decent two-CD set from the European part of the "Pebbles" series, featuring stand-out ravers from the likes of ROB HOEKE R'N'B GROUP, the PHANTOMS, the HAIGS, GOLDEN EARRINGS, SLAVES, the TAGES, the DEE JAYS, the SEVENS, the BEATCHERS (a.k.a. the NAMELOSERS), and others. The sound is pretty good, though I have some of this stuff direct from the masters on other things. No CUBY & BIZZARDS, which surprised me, but an enjoyable comp nonetheless! (AW)
(Bomp/PO Box 7112/Burbank, CA 91510)



VARIOUS ARTISTS

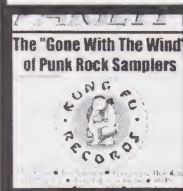
"Flash or Crash" LP/CD

A collection of mid-60's bands from the Pacific Northwest, ranging from the well-known (the SONICS, DON & THE

GOODTIMES) to the obscure. The "Pacific Northwest sound" at the time was basically a sax- or keyboards-heavy dance-oriented "frat rock" sound which I've never been too keen on, but even so there are some raunchy or moody gems here (especially by ROCKY &

THE RIDDERS, the TROLLEY'S, and the "NEW YORKERS"). (JB)

(Beat Rocket/PO Box 85/Coxsackie, NY 12051)



VARIOUS ARTISTS

"The 'Gone With the Wind' Of Punk Rock Samplers" CD

A Kung Fu Records sampler.

For those enamored of the

pop-punk/melodic hardcore axis, this is a bit of a treat. Included are previously released and some unreleased tracks from the ATARIS, VANDALS, USELESS ID, and other stuff from JOSH FREEZE, BIGWIG, APOCALYPSE HOBOKEN, and a little abomination that use the initials MXPX. (RK)

(Kung Fu/PO Box 3061/Seal Beach, CA 90740)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Hopelessly Devoted To You, vol. 3" CD

The latest cheapo sampler from the entire roster of Hopeless/Sub City bands.

The beauty of the Hopeless samplers is that you're guaranteed an unreleased track from every band, and this one's more than worth the \$4 for unreleased WEAKERTHANS, AGAINST ALL AUTHORITY, and DILLINGER 4. Even the new SAMIAM track is a winner, so one is even willing to forgive them FIFTEEN. (RK)
(Hopeless/PO Box 7495/Van Nuys, CA 91409-7495)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"The Hostage Situation" CD

I usually don't like label sampler CD comps, but this one is an exception. Hostage Records has been creating quite a storm, releasing a whole slew of killer records and breathing new life into the whole SoCal beachpunk scene. The difference between this comp and other shitty label comps is that all 27 tunes here are previously unreleased, and the highlights include the NUMBERS, SMOGTOWN(!), the PUSHERS, and the BODIES. (MC)
(Hostage/PO Box 7736/Huntington Beach, CA 92615)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Let's Dig 'Em Up #2: The Count Game" LP

A new series of '60s comps, this is the only one of the four issued thus far that I've been able to dig up. The sound quality is pretty high, and the band quality is good, with excellent contributions from bands from all over like THEE IMPALAS, the MOON-DAWGS, ERIC AND THE NORSEMAN, RUBBER MAZE, the ROCKING GHOSTS, LES SERPENTS NOIR and others.

Too bad the liner notes make the type in BLACK TO COMM mag seem large by comparison! (AW)
(no address)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Old Skars and Upstarts 2001" CD

Unfortunately, there is mostly crapola on this compilation featuring all the bands on Duane Peters' Disaster label. The best songs are probably the DISTILLERS' cover of BLITZ's "Warriors" and the U.S. BOMBS tune. Even the SMOGTOWN song isn't that good. Maybe next time. (JAW)
(Disaster/PO Box 7112/ Burbank, CA 91510)



VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Punch Drunk II" CD

Another comp showcasing both the winners and losers on one of the better streetpunk labels. The REDUCERS SF aptly start the record off with the strongest song, "Our Noise", and other killers are ANTISEEN's "Suicide Boogie", the TEMPLARS' "Violence", the BODIES' "Innocent", and of course COCK SPARRER's "Chip On My Shoulder". There are some cool "previews" of upcoming releases as well, like the NIBLICK HENBANE track. (JAW)
(TKO/4104 24th Street #103/San Francisco, CA 94114)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Punx Unite" LP

Blistering compilation of hardcore/chaos punk from all around the world. Tons of heavy hitters on this one. The standout tracks are by the CASUALTIES and BLIND SOCIETY from America, ANTIDOTE from the Netherlands, FUNERAL DRESS from Belgium, and CHARGE 69 from France. (JC)
(Charged/PO Box 157/ High Bridge, NJ 08829)



VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Redefine The Rockstar, vol. 3" CD

A pretty non-riveting comp of alterna-rock, punky bands. Some sound like TOOL or STONE TEMPLE

PILOTS, that sort of thing, while others sound like your average college radio bands. Absolutely unnecessary. (SB)
(316 Productions/119-33 6th Avenue #1/College Point, NY 11356)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Stop Rape Now!" LP

This is cool. Damn cool. Go buy this now. It is one of the first respectable female punk comps that I've ever dropped the needle on. All female bands, from all over the world, with intelligent, biting, and straight-up furious songs about rape, and what it's like to be preyed upon. An important record. (SB)
(Outcast/PO Box 1387/Evanston, IL 60204)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Take the Brain Train to the Third Eye: Bud Mathis' Sunset Strip" CD

An awesome portrait of the Sunset Strip psych/garage rock scene from 1963-1967. This collection focuses on bands who were under the wing of Bud Mathis, a boxer turned songwriter/manager/swinging L.A. scenester. You get tunes by BRAIN TRAIN, the JOINT EFFORT, and Mathis himself, as well as his sons. The sound is akin to much of the stuff found on "Nuggets", which is a good thing. Also included are excellent and informative liner notes by Mike Stax. (MC)
(Bacchus Archives/PO Box 1975/Burbank, CA 91507)



VARIOUS ARTISTS

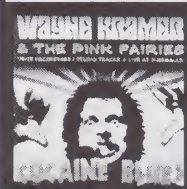
"We Are The World" CD

What we have here is a compilation of a bunch of DSS singles that have come out over the past few years. There are some heavy hitters like the TEMPLARS and the SOUL BOYS, and then there are the rest. Overall, this is a good retrospective CD documenting the DSS years and the international skinhead scene. (JAW)
(DSS/PO Box 739/4021 Linz/AUSTRIA)

VON ZIPPERS/LES SECRETAIRES VOLANTES

"Dead End Canada" split 7" EP

A soundtrack 7" record from the underground Canadian film of the same name. Four good tracks from two rockin' Canadian bands. I'm more partial to the VON ZIPPERS side, but both bands are pretty good. (JC)
(Mag Wheel/PO Box 64252/Calgary, Alberta T2K 6J1/CANADA)



WAYNE KRAMER & THE PINK FAIRIES

"Cocaine Blues" CD

A case where the excellent far outweighs the mediocre. The first four tracks of this CD were recorded live in England with WAYNE fresh out of federal prison (the details of which are laid out in the heady "Cocaine Blues"). The PINK FAIRIES are backing him up, and all

REVIEWS

involved were definitely on that night. The middle four tracks leave a lot more to be desired, coming across as late '70s AOR blandness, with a completely watered down version of JIMMY CLIFF's "The Harder They Come". As if they knew those tracks were going to be a bit hard to take, they saved the best for last - material recorded 4 years earlier with much more fire. (JC)
(Total Energy/PO Box 7712/Burbank, CA 91510)



WESLEY WILLIS

"Rush Hour" CD

A somber and reflective man creates a subtle, jazzy masterpiece. Songs like "2X4", "Chronic Schizophrenia", "Shit And Fuck", and "The Vultures Ate My Dead Ass Up" still chronicle the intense violent schizophrenia of America's premiere street poet. With it, we see an artist reaching and growing, searching for a new tomorrow. (JC)
(Alternative Tentacles/PO Box 419092/San Francisco, CA 94141)

WEIRD LOVEMAKERS

"Live: Bigger Than a Cookie, Better Than a Cake" CD

This band slipped through cracks for me, which was a big mistake because they rock like a motherfucker. Their live release is boiling over with energy. Live in Seattle, 17 speedy punk'n'roll tunes, excellent sound, and virtually devoid of stupid stage banter. (MC)
(Empty/PO Box 12034/Seattle, WA 98102)

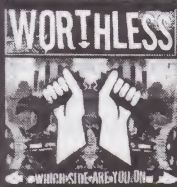


WHITE SKULL

"Pubic Glory, Secret Agony" CD

Enter the metal pagentry and all hail the cacophony of lightning fast guitars! Germany has ejaculated another Reich-rock band with all the pomp and circumstance of a firing squad. Female vocals coarsely call out the anthems, and the fast and faster guitars ebbing in unison, the double bass drums relentlessly pounding, and the commanding voice of a heavy German accent will lead you down that Warlock path. (MD)
(Radiation/Oeschstrasse 40/73072 Donzdorf/GERMANY)

SHITLIST



WORTHLESS

"Which Side Are You On" CD

Six new tracks, along with six old tracks from out-of-print comps and 7"s, all of which are from the last

three years. During that time, these guys have obviously lent more than half an ear to the career stylings of RANCID, but they do it well. From the early full throttle material, to the more CLASH sounding melodic stuff, and back again. Topped off with a suitably sweet, growly, vocalist. (RK)

(Metro/PO Box 1108/Pleasant Beach, NJ 08742)

WRETCHED ONES

"Go To Work" LP

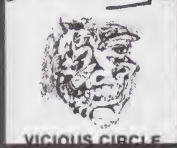
This is straightforward, beer-drinkin', butt-stinkin', psychobillyish punk rock. It ain't going to change yer life or anything, but it's a way rockin' good time all the same. (SB)
(Headache/PO Box 204/Midland Park, NJ 07432)

YOUTH GONE MAD

"Oompa Loompa" CD

This band dips into more musical styles, from ska to garage and flat-out punk-rock, than most bands out there. Having said that, there's still something missing for me. Don't know what, though. Most people will like this...the playing is better, the vocals are nastier, and all is well. (SB)
(Panz Production/BP 5058/31033 Toulouse, Cedex 5/France)

ZERO BOYS



ZERO BOYS

"Vicious Circle" CD

Although I've long since OD'ed on "hardcore" punk, this seminal Indiana band was so damn good that I still like even their faster thrash

songs. Why? Because unlike so many later outfits the ZERO BOYS knew how to write great tunes peppered with a raw-boned guitar sound, whether they were churning out classic p-rock or faster, quasi-hardcore material. One listen to fab blasts like "Amphetamine Addiction", "New Generation", "Civilization's Dying", "Forced Entry", and "Hightime" should win over even the most jaded punk. Kudos to Mr. Weasel for reissuing this classic. (JB)
(Panic Button/PO Box 148010/Chicago, IL 60614)

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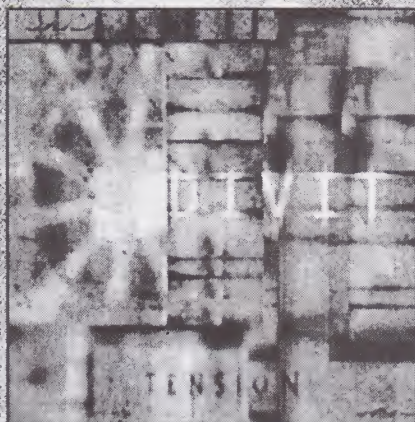
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DIVIT

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You can also check out DIVIT on the new FEARLESS RECORDS "Punk Goes Metal" comp (featuring AFI, STRUNG OUT, GUTTERMOUTH, etc...), the new FASTMUSIC comp (featuring unreleased NOFX, DAG NASTY, etc...), or the new P.B.S. video (featuring AT THE DRIVE IN, AFI, ATARIS, PENNYWISE, etc...). Also keep your eyes open for DIVIT's split CD with DIESEL BOY coming out in September, and more touring later this fall.

PO BOX 8345/BERKELEY, CA 94707 **coldfront** RECORDS WWW.COLDFRONTRECORDS.COM

DIESEL BOY

rode hard and
put away wet



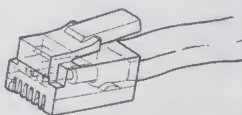
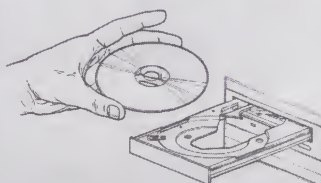
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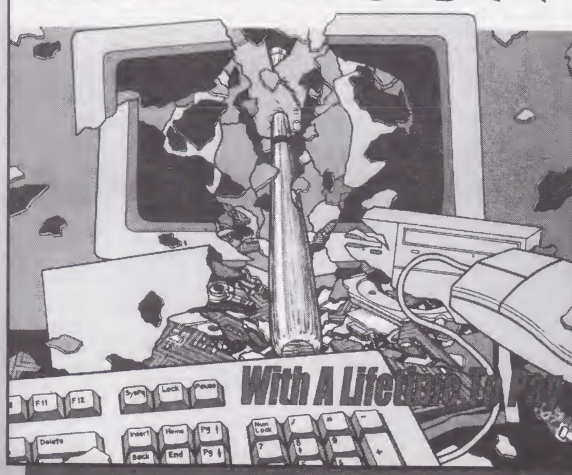


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